

THE
PEOPLE'S
BOOKS

THOMAS CARLYLE



THOMAS CARLYLE

BY LAUCHLAN MACLEAN WATT

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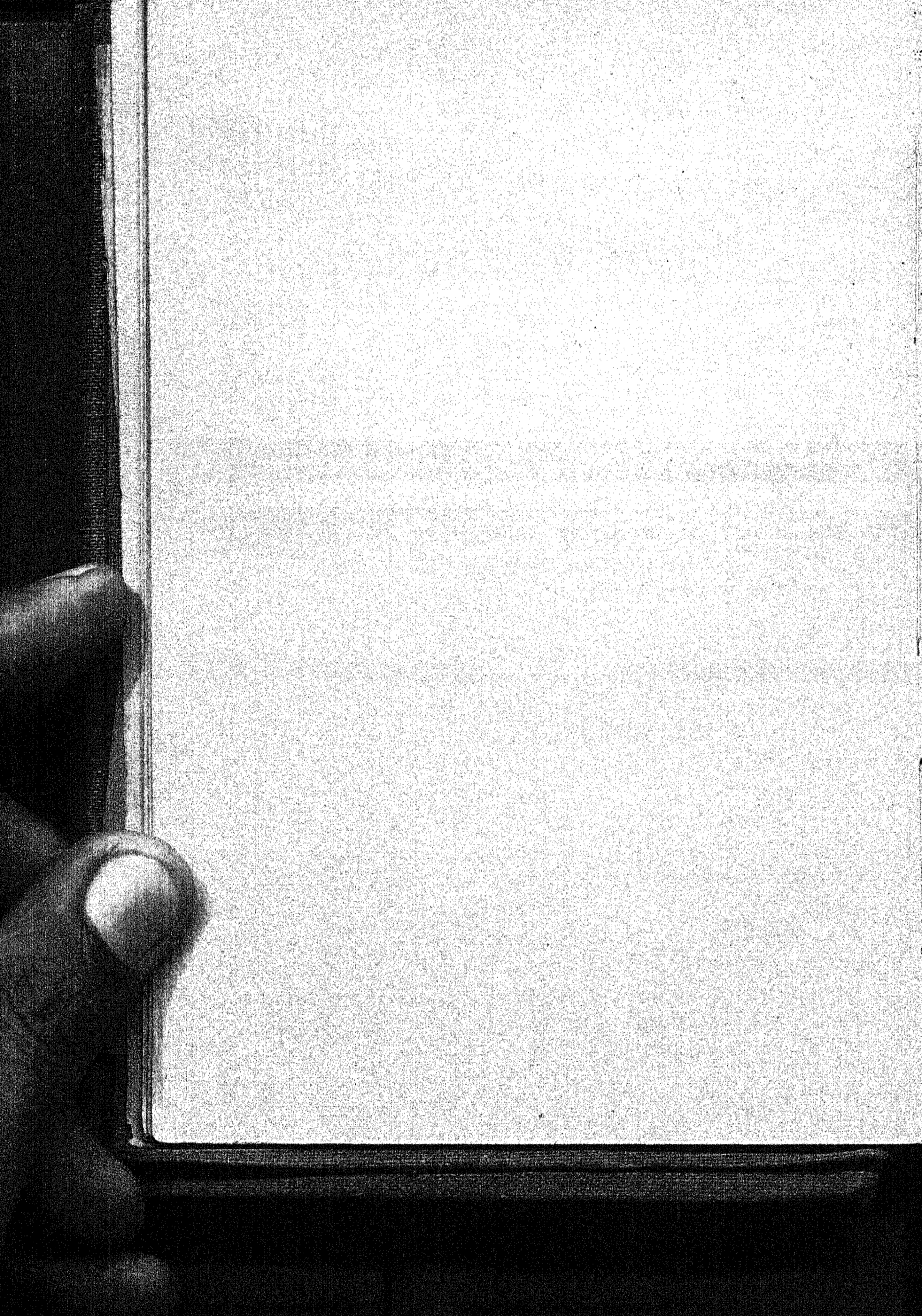
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THOMAS CARLYLE

CHAPTER I

BEGINNINGS

No more interesting personality dominated the life and thought of the nineteenth century than that of Thomas Carlyle. It is true that the century was rich beyond the record of preceding generations in writers and thinkers, who gave nourishment and guidance to all varieties and forms of intellectual inquiry.

In fiction, Thackeray and Dickens were in themselves a crowd. In fact, the latter gave to the reading world more characters, in every variety, than any other writer, except, perhaps, Shakespeare and Sir Walter Scott. He gave to the English world a saga of the joys and sorrows of the people, and of all classes of people, such as literature had previously considered beneath her notice and outside her pale, besides giving an impetus to imaginative writing and the creation of the modern problem-novel. Any historian who writes about the Stewart epoch has before him Macaulay's march-past with trumpets and cymbals, the pageant of history in full dress, which, as it moves across the stage, leaves behind it the lingering echo of its music. This was, of course, succeeded by the craze for docu-

mentary history—history written as if by the family lawyer, who spreads out his documents, examining the testing clause, to see that the witnesses have affixed their signature, and that no erasures have weakened any of the important paragraphs.

But there is another style in which history may be presented, a style which could only come out of the heart of a man who had been brought up rigidly in the teaching of that body of writers comprised in the Law and the Prophets of the ancient Hebrew Bible, which was the handbook of a Scotsman educated in the old parish schools of Scotland. That was the method, in a general sense, of Thomas Carlyle. The history of Israel, for example, the vacillation of its kings and leaders, now clinging to the highest and most spiritual ideals, now wavering from the razor-blade track of righteousness, now forgetting self and now remembering it to the absolute oblivion of everything else that makes for true greatness, the conflict of tribal pride and jealousy with the power and might of adjacent nationalities, can only be truly considered through the reflecting medium of contemporary prophecy. The prophet, with denunciatory warnings, was the history-recorder also. And he taught the nation, which he at the same time chastised with whip-like snap of minatory invective, by strong and lurid pictures of their sin and its consequence. Now the Bible was the manual of the village schoolmasters in Scotland in the early part of the nineteenth century, along with that remarkable compendium of philosophical theology which was called the Shorter Catechism, "especially intended for those of weaker capacity." The latter was, indeed, the spoon-food of the babes in the Scottish schools. It

was strong food, and, for the elect few, at any rate, it developed a powerful digestion. It certainly cultivated the peculiarly Scottish mind, dogmatic, logical, Socratic in many ways. From both of these sources there flowed into the heart and lip of those whom it suited, stern views of life and conduct, with the grit and pith of a vocabulary of iron and flame, qualified beyond anything of its kind to be an arsenal of vituperation, on the one hand, and power on the other.

The utilisation of these two means of Scottish education was not unlike the planting of an oak in a flower-pot. If the growth were provided for by steady transplanting to a larger vessel, until the tree could be moved into the forest itself, that would be all right enough, but, unless this were attended to, the result must be disaster both to the oak and to the vessel. So, if the heart in which the great facts of morality, divinity, and the relation of historic deed to eternal life were not in reality a growing heart, the result must be only fruitless and painful.

Thomas Carlyle's life is an example of the issue of such a method in a soul that not only grew, but lent all its native strength to the strength of what was planted within it. He reflected, in a manner unique to himself, the influence of his early environment; and, in his style of thinking, undertones and echoes of the fundamental elements of his educational system broke into utterance, making him pre-eminently, in everything he did, in his history and in his philosophy, the prophet as well as the preacher of the nineteenth century.

It is very difficult for a man to get away altogether from his past. The step of the moorman, springing with the elasticity of the vibrant medium he treads, clings to him after years of city pavements. The

shadows of the dark philosophies that brooded by his fireside, and that, like gaunt ghosts, crept with him along the narrow way between the cottage and the school, cling to him even after long association with his fellow-men in crowded places. So Carlyle, till the finish of his long years, the majority of which he passed in the heart of London, retained even in his written words the tang of the thought of that secluded district of Scotland where his heart was formed, and though he was known to the world at large as the Sage of Chelsea, he was the man of Ecclefechan till he died.

No preacher of righteousness, and truth, and "the gospel of going on, and not to die" could have had more influence on his age than this Annandale man of letters. No prophet gripped and shook his generation with such a horny hand, and such a grasp invincible, and few, if any, except Shakespeare and Scott, have had more appreciation awakened in lands beyond their own land. Nor have the writings and utterances of any thinker reflected more vividly, and sometimes luridly, the personality of their creator. Ruskin, the other prophet of the nineteenth century, approaches all his subjects as if in broadcloth, and with his gloves on; but the rugged Scotsman walks out with his budget of kingly truths before the world, and, no matter what clothing he wear in any interview, you feel the homespun and naked grip of a strong man's influence.

It will be our duty, in these pages, to look at the man and his work, in the hope of getting, as briefly as we can, an understanding and appreciation of them, and of their influence on his own world and on ours.

CHAPTER II

STRUGGLE

WHEN a man stands so square across the main highway of the world's life and thought, that the age he lives in cannot ignore his personality, nor dodge his teaching, he takes his place as one who is to be accounted for. As he cannot be snatched up by ever-moving time and explained at ease, the world must find leisure to discover what his function is, real or imaginary, and by what right he assumes that he has any special claim to obstruct the thoroughfare. This is all the more necessary, if his manner differs strikingly from that of other men. It takes some time, perhaps, to decide whether this difference be an expression of originality, or the product of a natural oddity, or simply an attempt to attract the attention of the crowd by studied eccentricity. Of course, it is the natural tendency of the world at first to stand aghast at anything it has never seen before, or which, at any rate, is bigger than it has ever seen passing through its narrow streets. Later on, when all the little dogs have barked at the unwonted manifestation, crowds, which attract other crowds, will follow, and, if opportunity offers, will gather round and listen. If a man be great enough and his teaching true, men will find that none of their little tape-lines and foot-rules which have met ordinary necessities will do for the task

of measuring him. He creates, in fact, his own standard, and then becomes a recognised criterion for others. Thomas Carlyle was a manifestation like that. When he stepped into the crossways of human thought he seemed to most a mere obstruction of the highway, with an inclination to a vociferous breach of the peace.

Jeffrey, the Aristarchus of Edinburgh literary taste, made an immortal mistake, when he began his notice of Wordsworth with the unforgettable words, "This will never do"; but he made as great an error, when he attributed to Carlyle the unlucky ambition of trying to appear more original than he was. The unfortunate thing is that Balaam's ass rebuking the prophet was not so unique an episode in history as it sometimes is taken to be.

Originality was the heritage of this child of Ecclefechan, that village in Dumfriesshire which in the late years of the eighteenth century repeated the miracle of the spirit of truth finding, in places remote, a soul fit to be its vehicle. A rugged-hearted hewer of stones and builder of houses was his father, a man who belonged to a sharp-tongued, edge-witted race, dour and indomitable, who certainly would follow, in all probability, no other man's plans for his houses, and, while building "siccar" foundations, would leave his own strong masterful look about the very gables that he reared. His family were considered by the neighbours as "pithy, bitter-speaking bodies, and awfu' fechtors." The gift of vocabulary is evidently a transmissible bequest. His mother was a faithful, loving woman, who had also the strong will to learn to write in order that she might correspond with her son. All through his work, the son

of this race spoke not only the dialect of this fireside, but raised the fabric of his life from the wind-beaten, rough-weather thought of the men of the moors where he was born, and where he played.

Taught his letters and his figures first at home, he went on to the village school. His father understood and appreciated the importance of learning, and the minister of the little and exclusive sect to which he belonged gave the young boy the rudiments of the Latin tongue. In 1805, he passed on to the Academy at Annan, where he read some French and Latin, and learned, besides, the alphabetic symbols of the language of Homer with something of Euclid and Algebra.

There was, of course, in the mind of the class to which Carlyle's family belonged in Scotland, only one profession which seemed suitable for a lad of parts. The highest ambition of any Scottish peasant mother was to see her son beat the pulpit board with authoritative hand, and, while he raised the dust of ancient controversies, lay down the law to the whole parish, waking or sleeping, in the high and narrow pews. It was inevitable, therefore, that like his kind, the winter of 1809 found Thomas Carlyle walking every weary foot of the long road to Edinburgh University, to be moulded for "the ministry." Carlyle was always much touched by remembrance of his father's generous treatment of him in this respect. He says, "With a noble faith, he launched me forth into a world which himself had never been permitted to visit."

He passed through the stereotyped curriculum of the period, perhaps looking oftener into byways than devoting himself to a study of the main channels in which

the prescribed class-work usually ran. Anyhow, this student, who was to be the greatest thinker of his age, left the university without a degree, and without having attained any real academic distinction. The benefit, which he acknowledged in later years to have received from his experience, was that it had introduced him to an intellectual atmosphere, and brought him into touch with the mystery of books. In fact, it made him a student, and gave him glimpses into the outer world over the wall of that parochialism which had hitherto limited his environment.

In obedience to the parental desire, he had attended the classes of divinity, but he had discovered in the bent of his mind a tendency to question the complacencies of his time. As he himself described the conflict out of which he emerged with a negative decision as regards the Church :—

“Now that I had gained man's estate, I was not sure that I believed the doctrines of my father's Kirk, and so I entered into my chamber and closed the door. . . . Doubt, Fear, Unbelief, Mockery and Scorn were there ; and I arose and wrestled with them in travail and agony of spirit. Whether I ate I know not, whether I slept I know not ; I only know that when I came forth again it was with the direful persuasion that I was the miserable owner of a diabolical arrangement called a stomach ; and I have never been free from that knowledge from that hour to this, and I suppose I never shall be until I am laid away in my grave.”

He never forgot his father's respectful acceptance of his decision that he could not become a minister, but he knew that the memory of the disappointment was an abiding sorrow for his mother.

The next possible opening for a clever lad with the

hall-mark of the university upon him, was teaching; and Carlyle, who had developed his mathematical faculty, was in 1814 appointed tutor of that subject at Annan. His sixty pounds a year which he earned there did not give him opportunity for great things, but it enabled him to manage along, and his father had so succeeded in his own affairs, as to feel justified in laying down chisel and mallet, and retiring to a small farm near his native village.

Carlyle's real step into the wide world took place when, owing to certain dissatisfactions in Kirkcaldy in regard to the teaching of Edward Irving, a rival school was started there, over which Carlyle was appointed master in 1816. Edward Irving had first been acting as mathematical tutor at Haddington, and so, coming into acquaintance with Dr. John Welsh, was employed to be tutor for his clever daughter Jane, teaching her every morning from six to eight o'clock, before he opened his own school. In this way began that intimacy which, passing through the phase of love unrequited, remained a lifelong friendship. Carlyle, as mathematical master at Annan, had heard a great deal of praise of Irving, and does not hide the fact that he was a little jealous of the success of his compeer. The position, therefore, in Kirkcaldy was one fraught with possibilities of misunderstanding and unpleasantness between the two young Annandale dominions, but Irving, with a gentleness of spirit almost unique in a world of too frequent jealousies, took his young countryman at once into his friendship. They became comrades in the broad highway of literary study, and in the holiday exploration of the interesting country which lay adjacent to the

sphere of their labours. Writing, later on, of Irving, Carlyle says :—

“But for him, I had never known what the communion of man with man means. His was the freest, brotherliest, bravest human soul man ever came in contact with. I call him, on the whole, the best man I have ever, after trial enough, found in this world, or now hope to find.”

At this time, the chief staple of mental food which moulded Carlyle's outlook was Gibbon's writings. The sceptical tone of that writer kept whispering doubts in his heart. Two years were enough to make the comrades weary of dominie work; so they packed up, and bade a long farewell to the “Lang Toun,” following hope, which enticed them to the city of Edinburgh. Carlyle carried with him, as if to take the place of the faith which, at least for a while, he had flung overboard, the gnawing dyspepsia that henceforward became his constant companion.

His present ideal was to study for the Bar, but he would have, at the same time, to endeavour to make shift for a living during his study for that profession by such teaching and writing as he could secure. A few pupils and an odd article or two for Brewster's *Encyclopædia* fell his way, but the necessity for bread and butter very soon decided that the legal studies must be abandoned. The hard work and privation he now experienced made him turn back, later on through the years, to his Edinburgh experience, with painful association, and it became the memory of what he called his purgatory. Indeed, in 1819 he seems to have thought of emigration, for he says, in one of his letters to Irving :—

"I have the ends of my thought to bring together . . . my views of life to reform, my health to recover, and then once more I shall venture my bark on the waters of this wide realm, and, if she cannot weather it, I shall steer west and try the waters of another world."

Finding that such private teaching as he could secure would not sufficiently supply "the meat that perisheth," he looked further into the world, and his thoughts turned towards literature, with that vague, shadowy hope, so full of promise for all who are discontented with whatsoever sphere they occupy. His study of German, the store of thought in which language was then practically unknown in this country, made him hope for employment in translating Schiller, but he vainly tried to secure this.

In one of his expeditions with Irving he had met, in Haddington, the woman who was to be for him the one great influence of her sex in all the world—Jane Baillie Welsh, daughter of the Doctor John Welsh, well-known in Haddington and vicinity, in whose house Irving had been friend and tutor. She was a clever, witty, imaginative personality, but she possessed a will of her own, which perhaps was not without risk for future relationships, meanwhile "in the lap of the gods."

The literary divinity of Edinburgh at this time was Francis Jeffrey, who edited the *Edinburgh Review*; and, when the meal got low down in the barrel, and the cruse of oil was almost dry, Carlyle bethought him of the possibilities of tapping such a source. With great struggle, and much expenditure of thought, he wrote, therefore, a review, condemning the work of Pictet, the French physicist, which, after much perturbation and something like a prayer, he despatched to the great

man, in the hope that a cheque might come with the august signature, to relieve and encourage; but the article dropped into the echoless void of absolute forgottenness. It never was heard of again.

In 1822, at the princely salary of two hundred pounds a year, this man who had been walking in straitened and darkened ways, was, through the influence of Irving, now in London, appointed tutor to the sons of a wealthy lady named Buller. He pushed on with a translation of Legendre's *Geometry*, which, with an *Essay on Proportion*, was published in 1824, Carlyle receiving £50 for it—his first book. The *Essay on Proportion* was declared by an authority to be "as good a substitute for the Fifth Book of Euclid as could be given in speech." The Buller family shortly afterwards went back to London, and Carlyle, who had gone to his father's farm, persevered with the translation of Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister*. Soon, however, he followed his pupils to the great metropolis, and looked about for literary employment. His attention was evidently fully turned towards German literature, for he contributed a paper that year on Goethe's *Faust* to the *New Edinburgh Review*. The *London Magazine* engaged him to write *Portraits of Men of Genius and Character*, beginning with the life of Schiller. He was paid nothing for this contribution, but in 1825, when it was published in volume form he received £100. A German translation had the honour, delightful to Carlyle, of a preface by Goethe. Boyd of Edinburgh published his version of *Wilhelm Meister*. But Carlyle was not happy in London, from influences within and without. He was ever extremely susceptible to the din of the city. The faintest noise distracted him; while he was persecuted, at every step,

by his ancient enemy, indigestion. The fact is, he seems to have been homesick for Annandale; so his father took for him a little place at Hoddam Hill, three miles from his own homestead, where he settled down to write about German Romance. The farm he did not manage, but his brother attended to it, and the faithful, loving mother was continually present, solicitous about the bodily needs of her clever son.

He had before him, all this time, the attainment of the

“blessed privilege
Of being independent.”

On that contingency centred the consummation of his hopes, Jane Welsh having promised that she would then become his wife. His idea was that they should live on the farm-estate of Craigenputtock, which was the hereditary possession of the Welshes. Jane Welsh, however, laughed at the project. In fact she had a fear of life at that lone outpost on the moors. It seemed impossible for Carlyle quite to realise what he was asking of this tenderly-nurtured woman. He even proposed that they should settle in the farmhouse of Scotsbrig with his parents, but the old people had more common-sense in such a matter. He never to the end realised the daily sacrifice she made, in working at all manner of domestic drudgeries, for he had been accustomed to seeing the women of a household baking, washing and cooking, and doing all that family life demanded. But she had given him her soul; and there was no withdrawal of the gift. On 17th October 1826, therefore, they were married, and settled down, at least for a while, at 21 Comely Bank, Edinburgh.

That he had confidence, at this time, in the power of

his own genius, and was only looking about for occupation, and that his life-work was to be literature, was perfectly clear to him ; but he had within his heart the restlessness which springs from uncertainty of the direction on which he ought to concentrate. It is true that the world is full of topics, accumulated questions unanswered, the heritage of the ages. One would imagine that a literary man had just to dip his pen in these, and write his message ; but his message is only worth writing and worth reading if it deal with what really interests himself, and the many voices at first confuse the aspirant for utterance.

Into the midst of this uncertainty, came a formal introduction from Procter (Barry Cornwall) to Jeffrey, who had reviewed *Wilhelm Meister* in the *Edinburgh Review* as a work "eminently absurd, puerile, incongruous and affected." Jeffrey, of course, knew nothing about German literature, but he was not long in perceiving, not only that Carlyle was a person of talent, but that he was really face to face with a daring and original genius. It was the beginning of a new and influential friendship, and the pages of the *Edinburgh Review* were opened to him with a paper on Jean Paul Richter, to be followed by the more elaborate and grave article on German literature generally. The most remarkable evidence of Jeffrey's critical myopsis is that he tried to bring back Carlyle from his German mysticism, because it was new, and because it awakened a flutter in the dovecote of Edinburgh Whiggism. Nevertheless, he endeavoured in every way to help Carlyle forward, even trying to secure for him the Chair of Moral Philosophy in the University of St. Andrews, for which Goethe himself wrote a testimonial.

Wire-pulling and a multitude of petty influences, however, secured the post for another man. As Carlyle said, "The certificate of the angel Gabriel would not have availed me a pin's worth." "Professor Carlyle" would have been a loss to the world, which should certainly have been maimed in the deprivation to it of *The French Revolution*, *Sartor Resartus*, and *Frederick the Great*, even though it had received in exchange a volume or two of the Professor's Lectures on Moral Philosophy.

The glamour of Goethe hung like a magic atmosphere over this Edinburgh period, and the German poet was grateful to the Scottish man of letters for his interest in the intellectual work of the Fatherland.

Eighteen months' experience, however, held out little hope of immediate success, notwithstanding the intimate association with the brilliant circle into which, through the influence of Jeffrey, he had found access. But the recognition of the promise which he had displayed as an author, such as it was, did not meet the commoner necessities of life. Besides, he had within his heart a deep conviction of the reality of his powers, and a certain scheme of developing and utilising these. He therefore resolved to go out into the wilderness, to say good-bye to Edinburgh and Edinburgh society, and take up his abode in the solitude of Craigenputtock.

Froude, with a touch of natural exaggeration, describes it as "the dreariest spot in all the British dominions. The nearest cottage is more than a mile from it: the elevation, 700 feet above the sea, stunts the trees and limits the garden produce to the hardiest vegetables. The house is gaunt and hungry-looking. It stands, with the scanty fields attached, as an island in a sea of morass.

The landscape is unredeemed either by grace or grandeur, mere undulating hills of grass and heather, and peat bogs in the hollows between them." It was, besides, sixteen miles from the nearest town and the nearest doctor, a fact that must have weighed heavily sometimes on the delicate lady who shared the life in this seclusion.

There was not by any means financial ease—indeed, if his words are to be taken literally, the pinch was frequently felt. Thither came to visit him the comfortable and well-to-do Jeffrey; a visit which was repaid by the Carlyles coming in to Craighcrook, the last visit there being a fortnight of late, stormy sittings, which probably left unpleasant memories in their subsequent relationships. In his *Reminiscences*, which often are quaintly suggestive of *Sartor Resartus*, he draws aside the curtain from these experiences with a somewhat weary hand, and declares quite openly that after the exhausting and uninteresting dinners and functions, there was a real pleasure in returning to the hill solitudes. One hears the plash of the solitary rain in his description.

"Well do I remember our return to Craigenputtock, after night fell, amid the gleaming yellow leaves and the desolate rains, with the clink of Alick's stithy, alone audible of human."

At first characteristically pleased with his quiet environment, he soon was driven to growl epithets at it, and to write of it on "September 16, 1828, at this Devils' Den, Craigenputtock"!

Here he was not idle. The deepening quiet of his environment was fruitful of deepening thought, the rich fruits of which appear in his immortal *Essay on Burns*, and on the *Literature of Germany*, especially Goethe. Jeffrey, afraid of conventionality's feelings, tried to

cut up the immortal *Essay on Burns* in proof, but Carlyle insisted on its appearing as he wrote it. Garnett truly says, "The essay . . . is the very voice of Scotland, expressive of all her passionate love and tragic sorrow for her darling son. It has paragraphs of massy gold, capable of being beaten out into volumes, as indeed they have been." The wolf bayed frequently at the door, for he was a slow writer, and the articles on which he depended for his living were not so frequent as to be sufficiently productive. Furthermore, Carlyle had practically educated and was supporting his brother John, afterwards the editor of Irving's *History of Scottish Poetry* and translator of Dante, and had refused Jeffrey's most generous and disinterested offer of an annuity of £100, an offer which wounded the rugged nature it fell upon. Even when in 1830 he was reduced to a five-pound note he kept his brother ignorant of his state, and wrote only cheerful advice and encouragement to him.

Nevertheless, he was here achieving a bit of work, which, though received at first, when it appeared, with mockery and laughter, yet solemnised the world, and finally walked in its own way as one of the greatest teachers of mankind. He was toiling, in fact, at *Sartor Resartus*. The result was looked forward to with great anticipation. For his effort to make a livelihood by the drudgery of review articles meant to him intolerable headaches and weariness of the flesh. A book was a step towards a more hopeful and substantial future.

When the book was finished, he marched off to London with it, leaving his wife behind, in the solitudes. Jeffrey, who was now Lord Advocate, tried what he could, on behalf of his friend, with Murray the publisher, but it became a terrible drudge, punctuated with disappoint-

ments, for every one was afraid to touch such magnificence of originality. The fear of the risk of commercial failure, which has so frequently stood in the way of the exploiting of the very best thought, froze even the kindest of publishers. Carlyle had evidently hoped for two hundred pounds, but it looked much more probable that this child of his intellect was to perish still-born than that it was ever to be heard speaking forth its wisdom to the world. Indeed, instead of receiving, it was proposed that the book might be published if he would pay £150 for that privilege. A friend said to him, "You had better wait." "I will!" replied Carlyle, "to the end of eternity rather!"

Mrs. Carlyle followed him in a few weeks to London. Her decision when she had read the manuscript, "It is a work of genius!" spoke not only the truth about the book, as succeeding generations prove, but it uttered at the same time its doom for its own period, for Carlyle's own day was really afraid of works of genius, and considered the kind of men who produced such things as perilous to the existing state of society. The book, besides, ran so directly athwart convention that it was, to most, a maze of tangled conundrums, and in that limbo it had meanwhile to remain.

CHAPTER III

SARTOR RESARTUS

It was seven long years ere *Sartor Resartus* struggled into print in book form, although, having been torn up into sections, its dismembered limbs had appeared in *Fraser's Magazine*. There surely never was a bolder venture on the part of any editor ; for the disapproval which hailed its appearance became more intensely vociferous as it progressed. In memorable phrase, it was styled by one critic as "a heap of clotted nonsense." Of course, later on, it was acknowledged to be an absolute richness of intellectual cream, clotted by its very richness.

Carlyle pretends he was amused by its reception, but one can see that he was wounded in his deepest feelings, for it was the child of slow and loving preparation.

Although he had latterly dropped from himself the envelope of most of the old faith which had been the comfort of the home at Ecclefechan, he yet could not shake himself away from the habits of thought and expression of the life and literature of that household.

In a letter to Professor Wilson, he says—

"I have thoughts of beginning to prophesy next year, if I prosper ;"

and of his *Sartor Resartus*, which seems to have supplied

the staple of his industry at Craigenputtock, he leads us to believe that it was

"undoubtedly written among the mountain solitudes in 1831."

One can feel the influences of it in his letters of this time. The glimpses he gives us in these of his life at Craigenputtock are like windows into *Sartor Resartus*.

"I sit here in my little library, and laugh at the howling tempest. I walk often under cloud of night, conversing with the void heaven in the most pleasant fashion."

Life, in its deeper mystery, began to haunt him, almost like a shadow that followed his heels as he moved—

"Oh God, it is a fearful world we live in, a film spread over countless abysses, into which no eye has pierced."

And this, so brimful of imaginative suggestion, as he is taking his nightly walks on the frosty moor, the crisp ground under his feet, the stars gleaming overhead—

"Craigenputtock otherwise silent, solitary as Tadmore in the wilderness, yet the infinite vault still over it, and the earth a little ship of space in which it was sailing, and man everywhere in his Maker's eye and hands."

Carlyle was beginning to feel as if he were sacrificing himself to "occasional" literature, and he was determined to forsake it.

"In this valley of the shadow of magazine editors we shall not always linger."

He calls out, irritated by disappointment following disappointment—

"I have a book in me that will cause ears to tingle!"

This was *Sartor Resartus*, the philosophy of life whim-

sically pinned on to the philosophy of clothes, with spiritual autobiographical glimpses, and idylls of as rare and exquisite beauty as our day has seen. Although the book had its prototypes in Swift, in Fuchs, and in Richter, it was original to Carlyle's treatment in making a German Professor-of-Things-in-General give his summaries of life. There is no doubt whatever, I think, that the suggestion probably came to him during the writing of his essay on Burns, from the well-known story of the poet leaving a friend in order to speak with a man clothed pretty much in rags. "What made you speak to a person like that?" asked his friend. But the poet replied, "It was not the clothes, but the man I was speaking to." Such a thing would at once, to a mind like Carlyle's, be most fructifying.

His own experience, the unwillingness of the world to take him at his true value, depending so much on external considerations, on recommendations of cash and influence, gave added point to the idea; and, with sarcasm and insight, the book leapt forth created.

Everything in life, the little conventions, creeds, and institutions, all seemed to him to have a striking analogy to the garments in which humanity clothes itself. The influence of the times as he looked out upon them, stirred Carlyle's being to the very core, to a revolt against accepted conventionalities. Politics and religion alike were unsatisfactory. The coat of Moses and Abraham was stretching in its seams over the broad full-grown back of the later ages. The hammer and spade had developed muscle which all the pilgrimage of Hebrew tribes had not known. At the same time, they had developed a hunger and thirst for food and knowledge, and such a thing as a sense of rights as well

as right had come into the life of the labouring man.

Carlyle saw injustice reigning in society; and this feeling of his had been intensified by the lecturing he had received from Jeffrey, giving him the alternative of swallowing down his principles, smothering his honesty, or being driven out of the field of literary labour by what he considered to be quackery. Jeffrey and his kind could not understand mysticism, confusing it with misty-ism. To them, the rights of property were the only rights worth treasuring. Consideration of such matters as property and wages moved in pilgrim fashion hither and thither through the pages of *Sartor*. In that maelstrom of poetry and philosophy swirled the essential elements of Carlyle's teaching. Especially do you find the value of human life and his hatred of game-preserves dealt with, with a reiteration extremely Carlylean. The fear of over-population was ever constant with Jeffrey, so, in *Sartor*, Carlyle, in the very vein of Swift, suggests methods of keeping it down.

"Three days annually might suffice to shoot all the able-bodied paupers that had accumulated within the year, the very bodies might feed, if not the army and navy, at least the infirm fellow-paupers in workhouses and elsewhere."

But man is surely of more value than game, is Carlyle's conclusion.

The author's position at the time of its being written was almost melancholy. He was worried over the apparent failure of his brother John, whose hopes of succeeding in medicine seemed, indeed, to have burned low, and who, after being dependent on Carlyle for financial support for so long, was trying now to support

himself by magazine article writing, a method heartily condemned by Carlyle, who wrote,

"Magazine work is below street-sweeping as a trade."

Want, however, was actually at the door of Craigenputtock. He had written to Jeffrey telling his disappointments, and the latter gave a list of possible situations suitable for this man, in whose heart such truth as the age had never heard of was gnawing its fingers for hunger of utterance. He mentioned a clerkship on the Excise, a situation in the British Museum, a secretaryship in a merchant's house! It makes strange reading to-day, and it was doubtless a painful revelation to Carlyle of his position in the esteem of the world.

Meanwhile, the lady who had stooped to share his life, and whose existence at Craigenputtock was not unlike that of a housekeeper paying her own expenses, was becoming not a little heart-broken, and feeling somewhat degraded. It is remarkable to hear him, who was considered so heterodox in regard to ordinary religion, writing to his brother John:—

"Bear up. Front it boldly. There are friendly eyes upon you, and hearts praying for you."

He had confidence in the power of the book he was writing, yet, at the same time, he forecast with absolute accuracy the world's reception of it. He considered

"that the critical public will cackle vituperatively, or perhaps maintain total silence. It was the best I had in me, what God had given, and which the devil cannot take away!"

In this very letter, in which he gives the critical estimate

of his work, he draws aside the curtain a little bit from his creed, telling his brother,

"Continue to trust in God. No doubt, He sent you hither to work out His will. It is man's mission, could he but rightly walk in it."

The advent of *Sartor Resartus* into the literary world of this period must have been like the entry of Diogenes into the drawing-room of Windsor Castle during a State reception. There are certain ways of holding one's head, or using one's hands, of smothering down a cough, which are labelled etiquette. It is unfashionable to give utterance to every feeling, and every emotion, but here was a critic of the world itself, stating, in the plainest terms, though in eloquence unexcelled, his opinions of everybody and everything, every relation and every duty of man!

The fruits of the French Revolution, in which men, inflamed with the passion of liberty and reaction from the past which had overclouded them, flung overboard the old settled ideas of society and faith, had spread over Europe. As they tore these up with rough-and-ready hands, they also flung into the void of scorn, to wither out their lives, many vital principles and eternal interests which clung to the roots of them. The result was the advent into Europe of blank materialism. For them, there was no God. Mind was a manifestation of matter, and life was explained as a system and sequence of mechanical effects from mechanical causes. Men who had escaped from the upper and lower millstones of proud aristocracy and as proud an ecclesiastical bureaucracy, looked on the rolling spheres, then shut their eyes, and said, "We see no God." It began to be

foreseen that the day might arrive when, to such, at any rate, the world should become a piece of clockwork, God a gas or a nature-force, and the life beyond, a cemetery, with epitaphs the sum of immortality.

This was perhaps a natural reaction from the older submission to mere predestination as a principle of life. Predestination rigidly interpreted, with the exclusion of human free-will, reduced the garden of life to a uniform level of weedery. If it did not matter what a man did or said, of nobility or goodness, for the sake of his own soul's growth—if a man were damned already or marked out for glory already, in spite of either the evil or good with which he stained or clothed his days, then the incentive to virtue ceased, for him, to exist. But the materialism which ensued left a man pretty much in the condition of one who had torn his heart out of his bosom, and flung it to the crows. It left a blank in his being.

Carlyle, in his struggle after the meaning of life, wandered from the narrow environment of the predestinarian faith which had dominated his father's home at Ecclefechan, and found the old, orthodox Calvinism of that home environment and training falling, item by item, from his soul. He was like one rising into thinner air, through the continuous dropping of the ballast of his balloon overboard, without his control, the result being, of course, continual difficulty of breathing, and a constraint on the action of the heart. He could find no satisfaction in the materialistic explanation of the universe. For him, nothing could obliterate the necessity for a living, feeling, thinking, interested God, as an explanation of love, thought, and the instinct for good in the energy of man. Having

found, therefore, that he was without the ballast of the old orthodoxy, he searched for salvation elsewhere than in the dead, soulless void of a mechanical world. He found it in the message of Kant, Fichte, and Goethe, especially the last; and *Sartor Resartus* contains the explanation of the enigma, as it appeared to him.

Between the natural and the supernatural, there was required the rainbow arch of miracle; but Carlyle could not believe that this was anything but a rainbow which probably had its origin in the sunlight of sympathy falling on the mist of human tears that brooded over the gulf between the known and the unknown. Yet Nature meant to him a vocal expression of a living and sentient God. The world was a garden which was not the result of a putrescent decay of dead matter. The Deistic interpretation, which dominated the eighteenth century and came into the nineteenth, was repugnant to him, the conception, namely, that God had wound up the universe and had then sent it spinning, while He sat somewhere far off, giving himself the joy of seeing it go, but doing nothing to help or guide it.

The Germans, looking at life, felt, even in matter, a throbbing energy, which, crush it or cut it as much as you please, you neither can destroy nor capture. Hence, in Nature they found the supernatural, which to them became the life-pulse and the life-giving secret of every being. God in everything—it is a kind of pantheism; yet it shut off both materialism and deism, two representatives of the mechanical principle, from the sacred premises of the soul; and it permeated and saturated the mind of Carlyle so deeply that it ran over into *Sartor Resartus*, as into a vessel waiting for its reception.

He held, and he teaches therein, that you cannot

bottle Nature, nor can you tabloid or bovrilise it. Man's instinct demands that the spirit behind Nature be acknowledged as a living thing, "an unspeakable, God-like thing," to be faced with "awe, devout prostrations and humility of soul—worshipped, if not in words, then in silence."

Matter is a manifestation of spirit, "the garment and clothing of the higher celestial Invisible, unimaginable, formless, dark with an excess of bright." His interpretation of the universe is illumined by his favourite quotation from Shakespeare—

"We are such stuff
As dreams are made of, and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep,"

corroborated by that utterance of the life-spirit of Goethe—

"It is thus at the roaring loom of Time I ply,
And weave for God the garment thou seest Him by."

At the same time, he was devoted to fact. He had a summarising eye, which could take in a vista at a glance.

The great difficulty, of course, always is that Nature is not in itself what it seems to each man to be. Each man is the interpreter of the world he lives in, and a certain proportion out of every hundred, interpreting even such a thing as colour, must interpret it entirely for himself, and independently of received conclusions. Hence, mind is not a "product of Nature."

The spirit of idealism in *Sartor* remained with Carlyle to the end; but still, in reminiscent solitude, his heart responded to much of the old religious power of his youthful environment. His thought that the universe which enfolded life was divine got clouded with pessim-

ism in his later days ; but his poetic non-analytic philosophy of Nature clutched with both hands on to the certainty that this changing universe was upheld by a personal divine Wisdom, and, hanging on to that, he felt himself swung along the line of God's purpose from mystery to mystery towards the final explanation.

Along this track shone the light of that guiding constellation of his, " Might is right," that is, the strength of the final Righteousness will prevail. It is not the motto of a kind of eternal boxing-ring where only muscle wins, but is the recognition and enunciation of the fact that might and right are one.

He continually attacked the evolution theory, and smashed Darwin whenever he could, because he did not see that both of them were working in the same direction,

" That through the ages, an unceasing purpose runs,"

that there is

" One great divine event
To which the whole creation moves."

Nevertheless Darwin's thesis and the result of his patient search for truth and knowledge arrested the whole world of European thought, and changed the point of view of the educated mass of men.

Carlyle hangs his recognition of God's purpose as a shining firmament above the misty vapours and smoky clouds of human speculations, human struggle, environment, and the oppression, selfishness, sin, and sorrow of man ; and he studs it with starry nuggets of thought, which, seen sometimes through rents in the veil, may serve souls struggling in the welter for steering by.

His religion has the true agnosticism of reverence within it.

"To the wisest man, wide as is his vision, Nature remains of quite infinite depth, of quite infinite expansion; and all experience thereof limits itself to some few computed centuries and measured square miles."

Man knows as little or as much of the secret of the universe, as the minnow does of the

"ocean tides and periodic currents, the trade winds and monsoons and moon's eclipses,"

though it may know

"every cranny and pebble and quality and accident of its little native creek."

The two

"great fundamentals of world-enveloping experience, Space and Time,"

are the enfolding garment of

"our celestial Me . . . Know of a truth that only the time-shadows have perished or are perishable, that the real Being of whatever was, whatever is, and whatever will be, is even now and for ever!"

The summary of his faith is

"Love not pleasure; love God. This is the Everlasting Yea. . . Do the duty which lies nearest thee, which thou knowest to be a duty. Thy second duty will already have become clearer. . . Be no longer a chaos. . . Work while it is called To-day, for the night cometh wherein no man can work!"

Carlyle's gospel of work is the utilising of fructifying

opportunity. It is response to and criticism of the ancient dictum.

"Know thyself! thyself thou wilt never know—know thy work which were more to the purpose. . . . Know God! it will take thee, I suspect, to eternity to learn even the rudiments of this awful knowledge; more to the point to know what God bids thee do, and to do it."

As he wrote in December 1832 to his brother John:—

"Man issues from eternity; walks in a 'Time Element' encompassed by Eternity, and again in Eternity disappears. Fearful and wonderful. This only we know, that God is above it, that God made it, and rules it for good."

He did not much depart from this as his sum of faith. It had its root in the submission of his mother to the Divine Will, as expressed in the postscript which she added to her daughter's letter when Carlyle's father died—

"It is God that has done it; be still, my dear children."

CHAPTER IV

THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

It was in 1831 that Carlyle began his friendship with John Stuart Mill, which lasted warmly until the heated ebullition of the *Latter-Day Pamphlets* dissolved it. In Mill's *Autobiography*, we read :—

“I attempted, in the beginning of 1831, to embody in a series of articles, headed *The Spirit of the Age*, some of my new opinions, and especially to point out in the character of the present age the anomalies and evil characteristics of the transition from a system of opinions which had worn out to another only in process of being formed. The only effect which I know to have been produced by them was that Carlyle, then living in a secluded part of Scotland, read them in his solitude, and saying to himself (as he afterwards told me) ‘Here is a new Mystic,’ inquired on coming to London that autumn respecting their authorship; an inquiry which was the immediate cause of our being personally acquainted. . . . He soon found out that I was not ‘another Mystic.’ . . . We never approached much nearer to each other’s modes of thought than we were in the first years of our acquaintance. I did not, however, deem myself a competent judge of Carlyle. I felt that he was a poet, and that I was not; that he was a man of intuition, which I was not; and that as such, he not only saw many things long before me, which I could, only when they were pointed out to me, hobble after and prove, but that it was highly probable he could see many things which were not visible to me even after they were pointed out. I knew that I could

not see round him, and could never be certain that I saw over him; and I never presumed to judge him with any definiteness."

The difference between them was accentuated probably by a tale-bearer carrying some remarks in the Carlylean vein in regard to Mill's marriage with Mrs. Taylor. Carlyle was very sorry over the estrangement, for he could not forget the generous way in which his friend had laid at his disposal the mass of information he had himself accumulated for the work on the French Revolution, which he had in contemplation. Mrs. Carlyle hoped to bring the ragged edges of the friendship together again by means of a pleasant party, and Carlyle himself went out to be the bearer of the invitation. He, however, on the way met Mill, who gave him such a clear and direct snub, that he returned sad at heart, without having the courage to brave further rebuff.

His father's death in 1832 shook Carlyle right to the foundations of his soul. He never veiled his worship of that strong, intensely natural character, of whom he admired most of all the spiritual concentration upon action "with speech subservient thereto," whose very works in stone and lime he looked upon as a testimony to the heart-soundness of their creator. At his father's death he wrote,

"God give me to live to my father's honour and to His."

The old man understood his son; and very few had the same gift. There is a great deal that is pathetically fine in his remark to him on his last visit to Craigenputtock—

"Man, it is surely a pity that thou should sit yonder, with nothing but the eye of Omniscience to see thee, and thou with such a gift to speak !"

It is amusing to find Carlyle writing at this time to James, his youngest brother, who was anxious to marry, advising patience under the spur of affection, and laying down the law as to the place of a wife. We may be sure, he never submitted that letter to Mrs. Carlyle, or the caustic tongue and the quick eye would have left a comment on it !

In March 1832, the Carlyles returned to their moorland dwelling, but, in the beginning of the next year, from various considerations, they resolved to make another experiment with Edinburgh. In September he writes in his journal : "I have thoughts of lying buried alive here for many years, forgetting all stuff about 'reputation,' success, and so forth. . . . Two articles (of fifty pages) in the year will keep me living ; employment in that kind is open enough. For the rest I really find almost that I do *best* when *forgotten* of men, and nothing above or around me but the imperishable Heaven. It never wholly seems to me that I am to die in this wilderness : a feeling is always dimly with me that I am to be called out of it, and have work fit for me before I depart."

Yet later on in the same month he writes : "I must to Edinburgh in winter ; the solitude here, generally very irksome, is threatening to get injurious, to get intolerable."

Mrs. Carlyle's life at Craigenputtock was really that of a domestic drudge. Her health and happiness suffered, while the gloom and solitude, combined with the feeling of failure, began to crush himself into melancholy. Yet

here he wrote his *Diderot*, *Count Cagliostro*, and the *Diamond Necklace*, which one feels to be a pulse of portent for the *French Revolution*.

He almost quarrelled outright with Jeffrey over the application for the Chair of Astronomy in Edinburgh, as well as the question of the vacancy in the Chair of Rhetoric, Jeffrey having ventured upon some plain speech as to his tactlessness, and other things which had hindered his progress. Carlyle probably knew, as well as Jeffrey, how alien to his nature was a vaselined movement, on ball-bearings, towards popularity with those in authority, when he growled,

"My own private impression is, that I shall never get any promotion in this world!"

One has only to see how difficult his moods were, how trying to himself and to his friends, and especially to the clever woman whom ambition and the pride that a woman takes in genius had undoubtedly lured into uniting her fate with his. In his *Reminiscences* you find him walking along the heights or dreaming by the level haughs, but often over head in the bog-holes of despair, growling at his disaster, much of which might have been avoided if he had kept his eyes upon the track and recognised the inequalities of the world.

Out of the darkness he saw the far-off lights of London shining, and he thought he saw hope there; so he took one of the biggest plunges that a man might take. He was fully aware of his risks, but he had at the back of his mind a thought of America, where, as Emerson had assured him, he might find a door open for his genius. With a financial ballast of little over

two hundred pounds, he ventured on the literary life of the great metropolis, taking up his residence in Cheyne Row, Chelsea, in that house, now Number 24, which was to be his home for forty-seven years. Everything that might tempt him to return to Craigenputtock was removed. That house on the moorland had, anyhow, become to him a place of "lying, draggle-tails of byre-women, and peat-moss and isolation, and exasperation and confusion!" They carried most of their furniture with them to London. Here he began his great work on the French Revolution, his saga of the bloodstained dawn of liberty in Europe. In this he was much helped by the sympathy of John Stuart Mill, who had intended to write on that subject himself, but at once lent Carlyle the books he had gathered regarding that eventful period.

He settled down, with little glimpses of the wolf still occasionally on the doorstep, to what he called his "work, stern and grim," namely the *French Revolution*.

He was not cut out for the literary life, in its popular interpretation of intermittent sputterings, geyser-like, through the pages of magazines. His work could only mean to him great, truly prophetic appearances, interpositions in the life-thought of the nations—but they were real Vesuvius eruptions, pouring down burning lava of eloquence, which would cool into fertile soil on the plains below him. His intimacy with John Sterling, whose father was one of the giants of *The Times*, won an offer for him of employment along party lines for his pen; but this he would not submit to.

The public did not understand him. Society, to which he was introduced, thought that they beheld in him a

Johnson *redivivus*. As he moved through the drawing-rooms of Society, he always seemed to knock against bric-a-brac, or to have the hard luck of discovering by contact where the tenderest corns were, and to have the faculty of taking his stand upon them while he held forth his opinions on things in general. Hence, we find him writing:—

“It is twenty-three months since I earned a penny by the craft of Literature. . . . Providence warns me to have done with it. I have failed in the Divine Infernal Universe.”

At the same time, he is conscious of his own worth, for he says—

“I can reverence no existing man. I could write a better book than there has been in this country for generations;”

while to him the literary world, as it existed, was a thing which he felt compelled to defy. In this depressing situation he was himself most largely to blame, owing to his sometimes unlucky knack of epithet, calling the magazine literature of the day all kinds of names, consigning the Review Editors to various degrees of Tophet, and generally describing the magazines themselves as “the Dogs’ Carrion Cart.” He was, in very truth, a literary Athanasius, with his back to the stars, shaking his fist at the world. Unfortunately the world has its own way of dealing even with the greatest of figures in such an attitude, for the world carries the bag, keeps the key of the strong-room, and has control of most of the dividends which even a genius needs for his supply of necessary bread and butter.

His idea in regard to the form of his work on the French Revolution was to make it pictorial, which was

indeed in accordance with the constitution of his mind. It was to be a parade in the field of his thought, a march-past in "masses of colour," of the greatest human conflagration the world had ever seen.

Perhaps it was a trial for his good, and not a judgment, that occurred at this time; certainly nothing could be more memorable in the records of literary history. Carlyle lent Mill the manuscript of a completed volume, written in emotions of soul unrecordable; the manuscript was passed on by the latter to Mrs. Taylor, and, having fallen from the table on which it had been placed overnight, was used by a rough-and-ready maid for lighting the fire next morning. Surely, never was a more ghastly shipwreck of concentrated hopes! In a state bordering on madness, Mill came to tell his friend what had happened. Carlyle's first word, when he returned to his wife, having at last managed to get Mill to go home in his distress, revealed a vein of absolute charity, rich as the most golden ore that ever was in a human heart. Mrs. Carlyle reports the statement of her husband—

"‘Mill, poor fellow,’ said he, ‘is terribly cut up. We must endeavour to hide from him how very serious this business is for us.’”

One could forgive, and erase, volumes of recorded crabbedness with such a phrase as this! It was impossible, of course, to begin immediately to replace the shattered temple, the monument of his industry, with the immeasurable wonder of his vision thus obliterated. He spent some weeks reading Captain Marryat's sea novels to keep his mind off the tragedy.

It is pathetic to hear how at length he resumed his

venture. Jane Welsh was his good angel in this, with her sympathy, openly lamenting,

"condoling, and encouraging, like a nobler second self. In heaven is nothing beautifuller."

When he began

"cautiously, as on ice paper-thin, once more, not sure, at a job more like breaking my heart than any other experience,"

the woman of genius was ever near him with encouragement—

"burned like a steady lamp beside me."

Mill tried every way of recompense; tried to get him to take two hundred pounds, of which he retained one hundred to cover the cost of living during the period in which the volume had been written. The memory of that hundred pounds stuck with Carlyle. He wondered how to get Mill to take it back, and could find no way.

At length, like a ghost from the tomb, or rather like an angel of the resurrection, the volume rose again out of the alembic of his memory. But few books ever written could have had so much of the red blood of real suffering upon them. His own statement gave his opinion:—

"What they will do with this book, no one knows, my Jeanie lass, but they have not had for two hundred years any book that came more truly from a man's very heart, so let them trample it under foot and hoof as they see best!"

"They cannot trample that!" was her reply, and she proved herself a reliable critic.

Meanwhile, the pinch was again being felt, and had to be met by magazine writing, punctuated with the wail—

“Oh, that Literature had never been devised! I am scourged back to it by the whip of necessity!”

History, with Carlyle, is the human epic, not a record of political conduct, nor a transcription of tombstones, nor stories of the deaths of kings, but a revelation of the divine and the human, now in apposition, anon in opposition, manifestations of the purpose of God and man crossing and intercrossing.

The great facts of history isolated are like all the individual component parts of a man, separated and put in bottles and labelled in the museum. You may take these and pour them in a vat together, stirring them with any wand you choose, but no man, and not even the ghost of a man, will rise from the process. What you have not studied fructifyingly is the invisible active spirit of a man, which sends out into the world deeds and thoughts begotten of his individuality, and which you cannot separate and tag. We do not care what any great conqueror ate to his breakfast, what pains he felt after it, or in what kind of bed he slept. What is of moment is rather his thought, his deed, the star he followed, the issues he achieved. These give you your man, a living presence with a voice, a heart that beats and a hand that labours. That was Carlyle's method. The other particulars could be got in the “*Who's Who*” of the period, if such a compilation existed. We do not believe that Napoleon lost the Battle of Waterloo through indigestion brought on by eating fried potatoes, nor do we believe that, as the advertisement suggests to-day, he might have won it if he had breakfasted on Quaker Oats.

As historian, his method varied, but while there is no doubt that his *French Revolution* possesses qualities which make it pre-eminently his most popular book to-day, it misses that important function of history which gives the real explanation of the cause of any phenomenon, and shows its results also.

Carlyle's method, which is purposely pictorial, undoubtedly makes the thing itself live in its epoch. It is far better, far more thrilling to have joined in a torch-light procession, or shared in the charge of the Light Brigade, than to read in cold blood the before and after of these episodes. Undoubtedly, one derives more benefit from Carlyle's book if he have previously read another history, however much inferior, of the circumstances whereof the Revolution was a natural consequence. Carlyle makes it the Tragedy of Imposture; the epic of heroism and hope, which, before they knew, were struggling knee-deep in blood of innocent as well as guilty; and he leaves his warning to all, tingling in the heart, ringing through the memory, as a wild bit of music dies from echo to echo along a grim defile, or through the colonnades of mystery in a great cathedral. His retort would be, just, of course,

"He that has ears to hear, let him hear!"

Aeschylus and Sophocles were more powerful ethical teachers as they were than if they had written seven sermons each on sin and its consequences, and published them in the columns of a weekly religious newspaper in Athens. Doubtless, the *French Revolution*, lighted by the bale-fire genius of Carlyle, fulfils its purpose and records its lesson far more deeply on the human soul and conscience than if it had been recorded in twenty

volumes, say by Sir Archibald Alison. It is the difference between the story of the Jews in the pages of Josephus and in the prophecies of Isaiah. We must be all the more thankful for what we have received, inasmuch as no other man has done the work so vividly and so well.

In the floating of the *French Revolution*, in 1837, he sailed conspicuously forward into the broad ocean of literary enterprise. John Stuart Mill, whose opinion was valued by Carlyle and by others, said of it—

“No work of greater genius, either historical or poetical, has been produced in this country for many years.”

This opinion has been corroborated by the sanction of the world, for it is now the most popular of all his books.

Dickens owed much to it in his *Tale of Two Cities*. He carried a copy about with him wherever he went.

As Froude says, “Carlyle was at once looked up to by some, who themselves were looked up to by the world, as a man of extraordinary gifts: perhaps as the highest among them all.”

Certainly the book has been an enriching fountain of many books, an inspiration and a strength in English literature. One cannot look forward to a time when its place shall ever be taken from it.

CHAPTER V

HEROES

THE first two years in Cheyne Row were not years of plenty. It required patience to wait for the world's appreciation of the *French Revolution* to flow back towards its author in helpful coin. Though the splendour of the book had riveted and entranced the attention of Thackeray, Southey, Macaulay, Hallam, Brougham, and Jeffrey, who all spoke and wrote highly of it, yet the sale was slow. Emerson worked hard for it in America, with a friendly devotion which beautifully touched the heart of Carlyle.

It was now that Harriet Martineau, with the aid of others, who were interested in this "talking oak" of a man, succeeded in getting Carlyle to begin his wonderful courses of *Lectures on German Literature*, on the *History of European Literature*, on *Revolutions*, and on *Heroes*, the result being, from all of these, a sum of eight hundred pounds. The lecturer struck most people as a phenomenon, a rugged vehicle of uncommon wisdom and eloquence, entirely a man of genius, though with certain peculiarities of appearance and manner, detrimental, in the opinions of some, to the general effect.

He felt for a little while tempted by the charms of oratorical success—"the treacherous syren," he calls it. Doubtless to him, as to so many, the preaching and

prophetic habit had unspeakable attractions. His last course of lectures—on *Heroes and Hero Worship*—was issued in 1841, and ran swiftly into popularity. The wolf no longer bayed ; and, indeed, he refused the Chair of History at Edinburgh University. A desire had been expressed to the patrons of the new professorship in this subject that the post should be offered to him. He wrote—and there is a reminiscence of Johnson in the words—

“Ten years ago such an undertaking might have been decisive of much for me, but it is too late now !

Patronage after the event always runs the chance of a snub.

In his *Heroes and Hero Worship* he concentrates the searchlight upon the life, labour, thought, and motive of representative individual souls, who, knowing their duty, saw before them their way measured, its necessities and its demands, and so grew like oaks among the forests of brushwood, stood up like giants above the crowd that marched with uniform step and stooped with the same cringe—“apes of the Dead Sea,” he calls them. He did not know life in crowds, much as he wrote about them. His knowledge of man was mostly through individual friendships, which were all intense. He thought all his friends beautiful, but the general slump of humanity he could not admire.

Joseph Mazzini, who knew Carlyle thoroughly well, recognised fully this defect.

“Mr. Carlyle,” says he, “comprehends only the individual; the true sense of the unity of the human race escapes him. To him, national history meant less the history of a people than the story of the individual personalities in a people.”

Thus, as Mazzini says,

"the nationality of Italy is, in his eyes, but the glory of having produced Dante and Christopher Columbus; the nationality of Germany that of having given birth to Luther, Goethe, and others. The shadow thrown by these gigantic men appears to eclipse from his view every trace of the national thought of which these men were only the interpreters or prophets, and of the people, who alone are its depositary."

He, however, revived a man's faith in himself and in his individuality. Each man is an Athanasius, and the dignity and nobleness of individual nature may become a truly uplifting influence in the generation for which a man lives, as a sparrow may be uplifted on wide-spread eagle wings.

He had no faith in the theory that following the line of individual happiness will lead to the happiness of others and of the race, that along the way of utility lies also the road to virtue and morality. There must be, he was convinced, faith in the righteous compulsion of virtuous necessity, eternal and unavoidable, beating upon and finding response in the virtue which is in each individual.

"What then?" asks he, "Is the heroic inspiration we name Virtue but some passion, some bubble of the blood, bubbling in the direction others profit by? I know not. Only this I know, if what thou namest Happiness be our true aim, then are we all astray!"

Now there is no doubt that in this he is right, for we have learned before now that he who seeks satisfaction in an earthly Paradise will find only bitterness of heart. It is natural, therefore, that the men who appeal to his imagination and catch his eye are men of enthusiastic

devotions and kindling inspirations, who thrust considerations of mere utility out of their way, as obstacles to progress, while they rush onward all aflame with the passion of their project, following the gleam of the morning star. They are not men who guide their lives by profit and loss accounts and tabulated schemes. They make their own nautical almanacs, and risk the sand-bars and the skerries. Indeed, the men who have made history were not men whose temperature was always normal.

His view of biography was guided by his belief that

"man was heaven-born—not the thrall of necessity, but the subduer thereof."

All through his study of men, he does not measure them by the conventional standards which up to their time have served a purpose like that of the machine under which every recruit has to pass. He takes into consideration the soul of the individual man and his environment, with the actions and reactions of these upon one another. How did a man's environment press upon him and impress him? How did he mould and modify these? How did he build a new world from the world which his strong right hand had to pull down around him in his progress and development? This undoubtedly enabled him, in considering the lives of Burns, Cromwell, Mahomet, Johnson, and Luther, to come to that conclusion in regard to each which was life-bringing, re-illuminating the real issues of character, and bringing in a new verdict for the defendant in the Court of Fair-play.

He insisted on the remorse, the penitence, the struggle against temptation and soul-weakness being considered

alongside of the failure and the fall. He reckoned up the moments of gleaming glory alongside of the dark hours of degradation. He showed that the dissecting-room was not the true judgment-hall of a man's character; and he made the world recognise that man's life is a constant struggle against the anomaly of flesh and spirit having their dwelling in the same house. Hence, what appeals to him most in the world of biography is the life of struggle against degrading influences which haunt a man like his shadow, which are, indeed, his shadow; and the constant effort after the highest things and purposes. Hence, also, the greatness of Scott does not appeal to him alongside of Burns, because Scott used literature so much for its financial value. He missed Sir Walter's devotion to honesty. And yet when Sir Walter died, Carlyle wrote in his journal, "A solid, well-built, effectual mind; the merits of which, after all this delirious exaggeration is done, and the reaction thereof is also done, will not be forgotten. He has played his part, and left none like or second to him. *Plaudite!*"

Every man is, to him, in spite of his environment and habit, in relation to circumstances of his own life, an original fact in creation. This book shows that universal equality is a chimera. Any man who could rise an hour before his neighbour, and fill that precious hour with work while the rest of the street is sleeping, is a proof of this; while the truth that religious history has had, and still has, its heroes, its leaders of men, makes him fling overboard as so much waste-paper, or as superabundant ballast which makes the ship of life ride heavily, dogmatic bunkum and theoretic nonsense.

He held consistently that progress is only possible

through development of the individual. Universal education was his constant cry, not Chartism. He scorned the mob, their blindness, stupidity, and inertia. He came to the conclusion that the only way to govern them was by the despotism of a strong man, whose life was one activity of strength-guided, dominating will.

He says, herein, that a man survives the mockery of men, not by his impostures, which largely may be the fruits of his own perfectly honest illusion, but by the truth that is in him, the honest conviction that is behind even his own self-deceptions. The heroes of a nation or a religion are the explanatory keys of the enigma of faith and action.

He lays down the principle of true judgment, namely, that a man ought to be tried, not by the light of to-day's conventions, but the light in which he moved in his own day. The methods of the quest of the Israelites for a country in which to form a state must not be measured by to-day's Congested District Legislation, and the law-maker of our present hour takes nothing to do with the standards of Abraham and Lot.

In this book, also, his personalising power of vivification is most strikingly manifested. He makes a man stand out as if lightning constantly played round him. He reverences the religious principle in man; the infinite and the eternal haunt him. His heroes are not statues stuck up in a museum, numbered according to a catalogue, but they are living—they move, they speak, they do, and so explain to the modern interviewer the secret of their presence in the world's Valhalla.

CHAPTER VI

CROMWELL

CARLYLE'S life, of course, is not a life of external action before the world, but a life of active observation, keen, illumined by humorous interest in human activities. He found most people much in his way, interfering with that solitude which his life of study and of creation demanded. To him interview meant interruption, and very frequently a manifestation of crabbed petulance, which easily built up a reputation of crustiness, outlasting many other traits of his character.

It was unfortunate, both for himself and for Mrs. Carlyle, that their natures were so much alike in bitter cynical humour, and in the demand for sympathy and solitude. She was indeed more cynical than he was, and could not resist the temptation to dangle anybody on the spear of her jest. While proud of her husband and of the achievement of his genius, she, at the same time, grudged him his devotion to his work, which she interpreted as meaning neglect of herself. Thus she wrote, in 1837, just when Carlyle was in his deepest struggle,

"Let no woman who values peace of soul ever marry an author!"

And again,

"One gets to feel a sort of indifference to his growling."

Yet she frankly admitted that her highest dreams in regard to the triumph of his genius had been realised. Between these two there existed, however, far more deeply than either of them fully knew, a love that never diminished. He wrote of her,

"She flitted round me like a perpetual radiance."

Mrs. Carlyle's mother paid a memorable visit in 1839, and left behind her an atmosphere of thunder. She had the warmth of her daughter without the genius.

In 1839, he got tired of what he called

"the foggy Babylon," "the huge roaring Niagara of things,"

and he hungered to get back to Craigenputtock,

"to the trickle of rills, and the nibbling of sheep,"

but Mrs. Carlyle's hand and heart ached still at the remembrance of the work and the weariness which had been her lot there, and he surrendered.

His pamphlet on Chartism had meanwhile awakened interest, arresting especially the attention of Arnold of Rugby. The great time of the Chartist agitation had called upon him for some kind of utterance, but his political creed was rather much of a bombshell, some fragments of which, in an explosion, fall back upon their author. While he wrote to several newspapers and magazines on such matters, he knew that it was a strain upon them. He said,

"There is no single journal that can stand my articles, no single one they would not blow the bottom out of."

His *Chartism* was not welcomed. As one expressed it, men were surprised that

"he should come down into the arena of political discussion, and thus put all his reputation at stake."

Of course, the faith of a man and the life of a people are all-embracing fundamentals of a thinker's labour, and politics comes within those limits. Art, science, and literature impinge upon the politics of men, and no thinker is above the duty of speaking for those who have no vocabulary of their own. The discontent which had arisen from the poverty and distress consequent upon the great industrial revolution of the close of the eighteenth century, the shifting of the balance of population into industrial centres, when England ceased to be an agricultural country and became a manufacturing one, the want consequent upon that unemployment which followed the introduction of machinery, gave rise to mill-burning, strikes, and all manner of violent protest of a blind proletariat. These were symptoms of national disease. They were also a symptom of hunger and, at any rate, of an inarticulate sense of wrong.

In his remarkable summarising method he slumps the question of poverty alongside of government. He takes Ireland as an example,

"a third of whose people has not potatoes enough to feed them for thirty weeks out of the year."

You hear an echo of *Sartor Resartus* in this :—

"The *sans* potato is of the self-same stuff as the superfinest Lord Lieutenant. Not an individual *sans* potato human scarecrow but had a life given him out of heaven, with eternities depending on it for once and no second time."

He emphasises the sense of stewardship in regard to possessions. He explains the doctrine of revolt as arising from the feeling that if a thing is wrong and oppressive, while yet men feel that it could be put down they will rise and put it down, whereas if they become

convinced that a thing is inevitable they submit to it. As he puts it in parable—

“An expedition was fitted out against the Simoom or the South Wind, but there were never two expeditions, because men found that it was not to be put down—it was one of those things not to be got rid of.”

There is thus a doctrine of revolt against the things that be, and that can be done without. The book suggests the principles of quest for a true aristocracy, which is not that whose blood runs blue because it has run so long and got so thin in the running, but the best aristocracy, with the best heart and the best head, the aristocracy of excellence in any community. He shows that while

“society exists for the protection of property,”

the poor man's labour is also a property to be protected.

“Thou shalt not steal”

also implies

“thou shalt not be stolen from. . . . Give every man what is his, the accurate price of what he has done and been. . . . No man shall any more complain, nor shall the earth suffer any more.”

As he showed also in his *Past and Present*, he is no milk-and-water theorist, giving jujubes to the discontented to keep them silent while they are sucking sweets; for he has written right across his teaching the stern law that no man shall eat unless he labour. When a nation's life falls short of that, it means that its kernel has shrunk from the shell, and it rings hollow.

Having visited the poorhouse of St. Ives and read the *Chronicle of Jocelyn de Brakland*, his imagination

was stirred, and through the window of fancy he looked into the quiet past of the Monastery of St. Edmunds. At the same time, he could not help comparing that life by the still waters with the struggle, the stress, the poverty, of the masses of his own day, driven, often by the oppression of want, to crime. Hence, in 1843, when he published his *Past and Present* it ran the gauntlet of determined opposition into enthusiastic approval. The influence of this book undoubtedly told with effect on the Factory Acts. It was, of course, a *parergon*, a side blow at life, to awaken his generation.

"I calculate it may awaken here and there a slumbering blockhead to rub his eyes, and consider what he is about in God's creation."

All the while, he was brooding on one of his best pieces of labour, namely, the life of Oliver Cromwell. This characteristic creation was the result of indignant reaction of soul, caused by a rebuff which Carlyle received from the temporary editor of the *Westminster*. Carlyle had been engaged to write a paper on Cromwell, but when Mill, on account of his health, went abroad, his substitute wrote conveying the intelligence that he intended himself to take up the subject, so that there was no necessity for Carlyle to trouble further! Conceit perhaps never secured for the world a greater boon; for the angered author determined on a greater enterprise than a magazine article.

It was a serious and earnest labour he now pledged himself to accomplish. He perambulated, during three years, the localities which had been the scenes of the life-work of the great Protector. Worcester, and Dunbar, which he visited on the 3rd September, the great crowning day of Cromwell's victorious genius, deepened the

imaginative impressions of his soul. As he proceeded with his ruminations, his scheme changed from merely projecting a history of the Civil War, as at first he had proposed to himself, into creating a life-pageant of Cromwell, to the accompaniment of his own letters. The work proceeded, punctuated with the writer's complaints. He growls,

"A continual misery to me. Abstruse toil, futile wrestling."

So little did he foresee results ! There must have been many bilious days in Cheyne Row, with groanings which need not have been uttered !

Published in 1845, three editions were early called for ; and Carlyle found, as he sat down upon the issue of his labour, that he was now occupying a higher seat in the eye of the public than any other historian of his time.

Carlyle was proud to declare that he owed the inspiration of his loving rehabilitation of the character of the great Protector to the spiritual insight of his mother, who often had expressed her conviction that the commonly received interpretation of that character must be entirely wrong.

His work meant only clear justice to what had become a jaded and bitter figure, sinister and cruel in aspect. It removed the stigma of selfishness. It showed a very human man, drawn into the vortex of the struggle for English freedom, at first against his will, his soul thereafter held to his task by devotion to honour and the rights of his fellow-men, tasting as his reward the constant irk of ingratitude, and, finally, two centuries of political obloquy.

Carlyle's book created a cult of Cromwellians ; but when these wished to raise a monument to their hero, Carlyle expressed his idea of what biography should mean to the world when he said—

“I think they ought to leave Cromwell alone of their memorials, and try to honour him in some more profitable way—by learning to be honest men like him, for example.”

Many opinions in regard to Cromwell had muscularised and materialised through the generations since his death. He was considered, for example, to be an absolute iconoclast, impatient of all æsthetic things, with no sympathy for art or literature, whining long prayers, and, at the same time, pretty well “feathering his own nest” at the expense of the nation. On the other hand, we find him preventing the loss to his country of a valuable library ; encouraging literary men, and purchasing manuscripts for one of the great universities. He was not, as was largely the opinion, a man who, in the matter of religion, only listened to the preacher whose theology he had instructed beforehand, as a man might only listen to the tunes he himself had put into a gramophone. He had Independents and Presbyterians alike as his chaplains. Though called upon by the law to crush Roman Catholicism, with which he had no sympathy, he yet was merciful and tender to Roman Catholics. He could have trampled the Episcopalians and the Quakers, the Unitarians and the Jews, but he had grace, and refused to persecute and hunt them ; while he was not afraid to threaten to bring his army over the Alps to the Pope himself at Rome, threatening, and threatening effectively, too, that unless the Pontiff ceased to drench the glens with Waldensian blood,

the guns of England would be heard thundering in the Vatican. These facts the world had forgotten. Carlyle did not constitute himself special pleader for his hero, but allowed that hero to live his life anew through his own letters and his papers, and to speak for himself with power so effective that the old slanderous shadows of the past slunk away abashed into the dark recesses of oblivion which are in the hinterlands of history.

Carlyle had, of course, predecessors in this labour, but their suggestions were not so weighty and influential as his. Lord John Russell had published a revised estimate of the much traduced Oliver. Before that time the views of contemporary writers, tinged deeply with partisan and personal spite, prevailed.

When men remembered how the grave of the great stern-hearted, fearless man had been desecrated by the sycophants of the Restoration, and his remains flung into a common trench at Tyburn Gallows, they were in the general mass inclined to consider that thus a traitor, self-deluded, who for his own gain led others into treason, had only received his due.

William Godwin, in his account of the Parliamentary period, had touched new strings in regard to Cromwell's character; and, later, in 1828, Macaulay in his Essay reviewing Hallam's *Constitutional History*, gave utterance to opinions which were considered bold at the time. Hallam had instituted a comparison between Cromwell and Napoleon, to which Macaulay objected. He pointed out that the English Revolution was undertaken to defend and restore, not to destroy.

"Cromwell reformed the representative system in a most judicious manner. He rendered the administration of justice uniform throughout the island. . . . He had first to form

himself, and then to form his troops. Out of raw levies he created an army, the bravest and the best disciplined, the most orderly in peace, and the most terrible in war, that Europe had seen. He called this body into existence. He led it to conquest. He never fought a battle without gaining it. He never gained a battle without annihilating the force opposed to him. Yet his victories were not the highest glory of his military system. The respect which his troops paid to property, their attachment to the laws and religion of their country, their submission to the civil power, their temperance, their intelligence, their industry, are without parallel. It was after the Restoration that the spirit which their great leader had infused into them was most signally displayed. At the command of the established government, an established government which had no means of enforcing obedience, fifty thousand soldiers whose backs no enemy had ever seen, either in domestic or in continental war, laid down their arms, and retired to the mass of the people, thenceforward to be distinguished only by superior diligence, sobriety, and regularity in the pursuits of peace, from the other members of the community which they had saved."

Lord Nugent, in his *Memorials of Hampden*, had taken up a similar line.

These had, however, been only hints and glimmerings of what was possible, and indeed necessary, for the vindication and justification of a man who had been, in one of her darkest periods, the saviour of his country. The fulness of the task fell to the hands of Carlyle, and he approved himself worthy of the trust.

Some of the very valuable material which he had collected for the earlier project of a History of the Civil War, was published only in 1898 by his nephew, Alexander Carlyle, as *Historical Sketches of noted Persons and Events in the Reigns of James I. and Charles I.* It was welcomed as the voice of the Master speaking out of eighteen years' silence from beyond the veil.

CHAPTER VII

FREDERICK THE GREAT

MEANWHILE, Carlyle's dearly beloved friend, John Sterling, had died in 1844; one of those who, like Arthur Hallam, Tennyson's friend, have a reputation inexplicable, considering the worth of their preserved literary work, yet live for the sake of exquisite intimacies and the ineffable charm of personality.

Carlyle and Archdeacon Hare had been named as executors, and the latter edited such works as had been left by Sterling, and wrote his life. Sterling was only thirty-eight when he died. His opinions, his labours, his writings made together only a manifestation of broken and incomplete efforts. Hare, looking at his task from the ecclesiastical point of view, wrote the biography of Sterling as a churchman, though he was only so for a period of eight years, and though he felt that he had made a mistake in the choice of his profession.

Carlyle was much dissatisfied with this work, and though he had been inclined to think there should be no biography, yet he was convinced that this sort of biography was wrong and incomplete, showing only a moon-glimmer side of the nature of his friend. He therefore took up the work anew for the satisfaction of his own soul.

Sterling's loss of faith in the orthodoxy of his time was not perhaps without an appeal of its own kind to

Carlyle. To many timid people it confirmed the suspicion of Carlyle's motives, and harmed him in their opinion. Carlyle cared little for that. What he reckoned of inestimable worth was that the world might see at least the true aspect of his friend, namely, the artist, not the imitation saint, however instinctively honest the imitation. Every step Sterling took towards the pulpit had been a mistake.

Carlyle passed by all Sterling's theological opinions and discussions in his letters as being

"dust whirlwinds."

This was a mistake, and it misled many in their estimate of Carlyle. Not theology, but the bent and bias of Sterling's own mind was to blame for Sterling's errors.

Carlyle loved the man. To Mrs. Carlyle he was a kind of Chevalier Bayard, *sans peur et sans reproche*. Carlyle felt bound to him by ties of grateful remembrance that he had written the first review article on his work in the *Westminster*, in 1839, which gave to him

"deep silent joy"

in his

"then mood and situation. The first generous human recognition, expressed with heroic emphasis and clear conviction . . . that one's poor battle in this world is not quite a mad and futile, that it is perhaps a worthy and manful one, which will come to something yet; this fact is a memorable one in every history; and for me Sterling, often enough the still gainsayer in our private communings, was the doer of this. The thought burnt in me like a lamp, for several days."

Carlyle thus, in 1851, gives voice to his love in his Biography, a monument of affection as true as ever was laid upon the cairn of any departed friend.

Henceforward, Carlyle's way was clear, his step unfaltering; and his strength was recognised by the reading world as that of a thinker whose message was valuable in content, as it was original in form.

His friendships at this time included such eminent men as Monckton Milnes, Chevalier Bunsen, Pusey, Thirlwall, Froude, Browning, Tennyson, Clough, Spedding, Forster, and Ruskin. Macaulay and he do not seem to have had many sympathies in common. He characteristically summarised his competitor's *History* as "a very great quantity of rhetorical wind."

Macaulay did not read Carlyle's works. That master of clear-flowing rhetoric had said to Macvey Napier in 1832,

"As to Carlyle, he might as well write in Irving's unknown tongue at once."

To Leigh Hunt, he wrote

"Carlyle is a man of talents, though absurdly overpraised by some of his admirers."

There was a reason, of course, for this attitude. Carlyle had advised a friend in feeble health to read

"the latest volume of Macaulay's *History*, or any other new novel."

When Carlyle met him at a dinner table, and heard him speak, he said he

"seemed a decent sort of fellow,"

and thought he had the look of oatmeal about him! His aphoristic summations were not testimonials for more intimate acquaintance.

The sudden wave of popularity after a time of neglect

and solitude was not good for Carlyle's nature. It made him more crabbed than ever, and especially was it the beginning of his remarkable surrender to the magnetic fascination of Lady Ashburton, the brilliant centre of London society. She held him submissive to the beck of her little finger; and Mrs. Carlyle felt in this the serious victory of a rival. She already had experienced the victorious rivalry of his books and book-writing. So much did the bitterness rankle in her soul that, in 1846, she fled from her home, apparently determined never to return. The advice of Joseph Mazzini, however, smothered down the fire, though it smoked and smouldered for a good while thereafter. Carlyle could not see any cause for the conflagration. He wrote

"We never parted before in such a manner, and all for literally nothing!"

The glimpse behind the curtain which her journal affords at this time is charged with the piteous power of tears.

There is not much of interest to recall in his life outside of his work. Every year he went to Annandale; but he found even quiet country places full of farm noises which distracted him. There were visits of friends like John Bright, Chalmers, and Emerson, which gave colour to what otherwise might probably be justly considered grey monotony. The American was much struck by the resemblance of his friend's character to Dr. Samuel Johnson, in the dogmatic censoriousness, impatient of all contradictions, the swinging sledge-hammer of rhetoric which both employed to kill a midge!

A visit to Ireland in 1846 gave him an opportunity of seeing the great Daniel O'Connell, whom Carlyle never liked, and whom he characterised as

"a lying scoundrel," "the Demosthenes of blarney."

It was naturally an unfruitful trip, for his outlook was obscured by entire lack of sympathy with what he called "Irish balderdash."

In 1850, came his *Latter-day Pamphlets*, very largely politics with a sore stomach and a squint, which startled painfully many of his friends, and dragged the newspapers after his heels, while, at the same time, it estranged Joseph Mazzini and John Stuart Mill. It was provoked by the stress of a reign of shame and revolt here and on the Continent, and "doctrinaire idealisms."

In 1851, he tried the water cure at Malvern, which only made his temper worse; and he passed on to see his mother, now eighty-four years of age. From this quiet visit he was summoned by Lady Ashburton to Paris, whither he went under the care of the Brownings. He was entirely unsuited for the understanding of France and Frenchmen. He found

"no gentleman in Paris,"

and could discern no genius in France since the Revolution! After a short visit to Germany in 1852, for which he embarked on board the

"greasy little wretch of a Leith steamer, laden to the water's edge with pig-iron and herrings,"

he was back again, to the misery of his work, annoyed by crowing cocks, which had to be bought off one by one; and at length in his famous room, from which every sound was excluded, he was toiling at his *Frederick*

the Great, and letting everybody know with whom he came in contact how, like the eagle of Prometheus, it gnawed upon his liver !

In his nervous condition, everything irritating became huge, megaphonic, the merest pipe a thunderblast. "The cocks and hens were as large as ostriches, and screamed and crowed with the power of a steam whistle."

Next year, Margaret Carlyle, the woman above all women fit to be the mother of this strong man of genius, passed away, proud to see her great son standing by her bed. It meant, to him, the end of home, in a deeper sense than his own home in Chelsea ever had been or could be. He expressed himself after this long farewell as

"being fallen very lonely, lame and broken in this pilgrimage."

He cried out in his mourning,

"Your poor Tom ! You cannot help him or cheer him any more ! From your grave in Ecclefechan Kirkyard, you bid him trust in God, and that also will he try if he can understand and do."

His experience of present-day questions did not encourage him to proceed far along that line. He turned therefore to the past. He curiously passed by John Knox, Luther, William the Conqueror, and Napoleon, and, as he looked along the horizon, the figure in the historical pageant which arrested his attention was Frederick the Great. Frederick the Great, who to others seemed the thief of Silesia, the armed burglar of the eighteenth century, leader of robbing gangs that made a nation, seemed to him as a type of the great, strong man, who makes his own environment, moulds the destinies of others, stands up above them, stupen-

dously ; but, while Frederick had the gift of a plentiful supply of strong will indomitable, he had not the gift of character like Cromwell. Considering that the Prussian monarchy was the ballast of modern history, he decided to begin with that as his next study. He looked and found himself at every turn more and more attracted and charmed by his choice. Then he commenced to bore into the mountains of recorded history. He growled, it is true, underneath the heap of memorials and despatches through which he had to burrow ; but when he had groaned himself into absolute conviction that this was the destiny of his life, he utilised the fruits of his visit to Germany to absolute perfection. Nevertheless, for all his grumblings over this extensive and wearisome tour, he had mastered the ground so thoroughly that no student of military affairs can ever afford to ignore his account of the fields of Frederick's activity.

The work he had entered into was discovered by him to entail a far greater labour and research than he had anticipated, demanding a second visit to Germany in 1858. Now, however, that he had, Samson-like, dragged down the house upon his head, he had to burrow into the whole tumbled mass of Europe of the eighteenth century, which had toppled around Frederick, and he had to set things in order, and rebuild practically the history of that period. He had to read authorities of all kinds, till the dust of his labour made him look like a miller who had fallen into his bins one after another in the process of grinding the meal for his daily bread. He kept himself in good health by hard riding, and calculated that he had covered thirty thousand miles during his work at *Frederick*. One can understand how this

kind of thing made for wreckage of peace in his household. As Mrs. Carlyle herself writes,

"It made entire devastation of any satisfactory semblance of home life or happiness."

Much, however, as both of these people of genius growled and grumbled, when the first two volumes of it were issued, she wrote a letter to him from Edinburgh, running over with praise of the

"magnificent book, the best of all your books, sparkling as the *French Revolution*, compact and finished as *Cromwell*."

Three thousand copies went off on a popular wave, and yet he could not help growling about the encomiums that were launched upon it in the newspapers—

"No better to me than the barking of dogs!"

Still, he was not out of the wood. As he turned over, in the brief respite, his chains rattled again, for it was only the first batch of his baking that he had delivered to the public. So much was it the burden of his life, that he could not endure even his wife's presence, while, at the same time, he was piteously appealing to her to come and protect him! Very characteristically she writes, in 1858,

"Life beside him is the life of a weathercock in high wind!"

And yet, he knew his weakness, for he writes pathetically,

"We have had a weary life pilgrimage together. Much bad road. O forgive me!"

But the clever tongue of the over-wearied wife could not help telling him that she believed these fine passages were only written to decorate his biography! The unfortunate circumstances of this life of genius made their

domestic pilgrimage a counter-march between the bitter wells of Marah and the sweet wells of Elim. She could not help displaying a certain jealousy of his books, while, at the same time, she was proud of sharing in the fame which she saw these were certain to secure from the unborn generations.

At last, after seven years of hard, close, determined, vast labour, years of growling and groaning, but all the time of resolute uplifting, the completed *Frederick* was laid at the feet of the world, which felt itself proud to accept the gift of genius. In Germany it evoked enthusiasm. Three issues ran off very rapidly. Scotland, as usual, having first sneered at her son, thought she would like, in view of the world, to get under his vine and fig-tree which he had reared by his own labour above his devoted head. Those who had pelted him for throwing stones at their fetishes were not slow to pretend that they had only been supplying him with ammunition all the while! "The obnoxious personage" of a few years previously became now a person much to be desired.

His *Frederick* stepped at once into national, almost international, literature, and gave him a place therein from which no man could shake him, right in the far front of English authors. It laid the crowning sheaf upon his reputation. He sat now on the pinnacle of his fame.

It was, of course, little wonder that Carlyle felt the labour of research so heavy, for he was in his fifty-sixth year when he began seriously the great task of his life. It occupied in space the third part of all his writings, and it involved closest application for fourteen years.

To get at the root of the matter, he accounted no

amount of trouble superfluous. He was very particular about even minor details. For example, he devoted himself to almost infinite research at Berlin to get at the truth about the uniform of the common German soldier of the period of Frederick. He gathered a library specially dealing with the subject, and amounting almost to two thousand volumes, while he covered the walls of his working room with pictures of his hero and maps of his campaigns. Dean Stanley said truly about Carlyle that, in his earnest endeavours in this labour, he "almost made himself a soldier and a statesman."

Yet, notwithstanding all his pains, he seems to have felt sometimes as though Frederick were hid from him behind the accumulations of historical material. He says—

"I never was admitted to Frederick's confidence, and I never cared very much about him."

With the latter part of this dictum the majority of his readers agreed, for to the thinking and sympathetic world Frederick was the devil's fiddler in that Dance of Death which history calls the Seven Years' War. To Von Ense in Germany he growled,

"What the devil had I to do with your Frederick?"

while to others he said that he had tried to put some humanity into Frederick, but found it hard work.

His eulogy of Frederick at first shocked the country, for that monarch was the human embodiment of Might without Right. Men were more inclined to accept Macaulay's estimate of the warrior whose power demanded in one battle nine acres of graveyard for the dead that fell for the whim of his greed for aggrandise-

ment of possessions and of self. Nevertheless, there was a side of Carlyle's nature that could not withhold admiration for such strength of character and invincible grit, callous of blood and slaughter, as Frederick displayed, and, though he grumbled, there is more than a suspicion that he had such love for his subject as made him indomitably persevere.

Its literary style is often terrible. It has been said—

"Whole pages are written in a species of crabbed shorthand; the speech of ordinary mortals is abandoned; and sometimes we can detect in the writer a sense of weariness and a desire to tumble out in any fashion the multitude of somewhat dreary facts which he had collected."

Yet it made Frederick and his age live and move and speak. It is a gallery of eighteenth-century vignettes, and no man can ever expect to surpass it in its own field. Every worker on the shores of the history of this period must fill his pitcher at the ocean of Carlyle.

CHAPTER VIII

SUCCESS AND SORROW

THE agitation of the Crimean War had found him again out-at-elbows with his countrymen. He blamed the "idle population of editors" for the upheaval. But the terrible horror of the Indian Mutiny got him round again into line with his blood. In this he was right, for no more terrible anguish ever created a saga of heroism in any race. His judgment, however, was perhaps a little tinged by his customary estimate of the coloured races.

His general life at this stage was, when it broke into his work, filled up by visits to friends, and voluminous curses at indigestion and the noisy world in which his lot was cast. Even when he spent a little time with "Old Fitz" the cows seemed to have had an unparalleled ebullition of lowing! He would have had the whole earth put in carpet slippers, or set on "domes of silence."

In 1854, when Disraeli was put forward by the Conservatives for the Lord Rectorship of the University of Glasgow, the Liberals had nominated Carlyle, but the evidence that he had seriously offended Scottish religious feeling was so strongly shown that his name had to be withdrawn. His extravagant words in regard to the pampering of paupers, and the shams of the religious profession of his day, were used against him in

the newspapers. It sounds strange to us now to read from an article on the matter—

“Mr. Carlyle neither possesses the talent nor the distinction, nor does he occupy the position which entitle a man to such an honour as the Rectorial Chair.”

How difficult it is to judge the size of anything which is too close up to our noses! The Scottish *Guardian* disapproved heartily of Mr. Disraeli, yet it speaks of Carlyle as a “still more obnoxious personage,” and styles him

“a man who has degraded his powers to the life-labour of sapping and mining the foundations of the truth, and opened the fire of his fiendish raillery against the citadel of our best aspirations and dearest hopes.”

This project, therefore, had to be abandoned.

The effect of his great work and its reception began, however, to undo all this. In 1865, he was elected Lord Rector of Edinburgh University, and next year he went to Edinburgh to deliver his Rectorial Address, accompanied by Tyndall and Huxley. This was a memorable triumph, although it marked a late stage of recognition in an arduous life-pilgrimage of genius. His subject was *The Choice of Books*, and he emphasised the difference between theory and knowledge, the confusion of the two resulting in loss of the soul, for it is the loss of truth, and the advent of blindness, paralysis, and death. To him, the university was not a school of specialising for the training to a trade, but a school of methodising of thought and knowledge. He alleged that

“the first nations of the world—the English and American—are going all away into wind and tongue.”

Having passed on for a week's rest to Scotsbrig, he was detained there by a sprained ankle. On April 20th,

he wrote a letter to his wife, but by the time it reached Chelsea her eyes were closed for ever to sunshine and shadow, and, as Carlyle himself said, the light of his life went out in their darkening. A remarkable co-operation it had been, which was scarce companionship, and yet was intimately knotted up with love. On 21st April, 1866, driving round Hyde Park, her earthly life suddenly ceased to be, and she was found sitting dead in her carriage.

It was a loss unspeakable in its intensity for Carlyle. This woman was one of the bravest and brightest influences in his life, though, perhaps, it was entirely true that he was not aware of the extent of his indebtedness until the veil of silence fell between. As he himself recorded in the inscription which he placed above her sleeping dust:—

"In her bright existence she had more sorrows than are common, but also a soft invincibility, a capacity of discernment, and a noble loyalty of heart, which are rare. . . . She was the true and loving helpmate of her husband, and by act and word unweariedly forwarded him as none else could in all of worthy that he did or attempted . . . suddenly snatched away from him, and the light of his life as if gone out."

He writes, full of the intimate pathos of truth,

"No full gust of tears came to my relief, nor has yet come."

She lies buried under the old grey ruined arches at Haddington, on the bosom of her father, waiting for the resurrection.

"In the nave of the old Abbey Kirk, long a ruin, now being saved from further decay, with the skies looking down on her, there sleeps my little Jeannie, and the light of her face will never shine on me more. . . . I say deliberately, her part in the stern battle, and except myself none knows how stern, was brighter and braver than my own."

They had walked a rough road together ; he was to do the rest of the journey alone. Fifteen years he took to finish it. His cry was

“My home is very gaunt and lonesome.”

In 1867, he wrote,

“Age is a crown of thorns.”

He felt the way of life becoming more and more a track in the desert with fewer companionships encountered, more numerous farewells. He felt deepeningly that he should go softly all his days “in bitterness of soul.”

He and his brother John tried to live together, but without success. He visited, among others, the Ashburtons at Mentone, writing occasionally his reminiscences. His hand and his heart were unstinted in their charity. In every movement for the relief of the labouring masses he was ever forward, for, in spite of his utterances, he was soft of heart towards the wreckage and sludge of humanity. As he moved himself along the dark side, out of the sun, his heart warmed to those who were also in the desert and the chill.

His work was done, and his occasional utterances in politics were marked by error of outlook. He had no sympathy with the Civil War which brought the abolition of slavery in America ; for the line of vision of his two eyes crossed each other in every matter relating to a black man. When he looked at colour in humanity he could not discern the difference between the right of might and the might of right ! He wrote, however, in this closing period, his *Early Kings of Norway*, and his *Note on the Portraits of John Knox*.

Meanwhile the world was pouring recognitions upon him. He received, in 1874, the Prussian “Order of

Merit" which had been instituted by Frederick the Great. He declined a pension and the Order of the Grand Cross of the Bath which was offered him by Beaconsfield, whom he had spent most of his life banging with hailstorms of contumelious epithet! He acknowledges in writing to his brother John that he had seldom spoken of Beaconsfield without contempt,

"and yet, see, here he comes with a pan of hot coals for my guilty head!"

His friendships, though few towards the close, belonged to the deepest side of his heart. The Bible and Shakespeare were his final friends. All the while he had been putting his affairs in order. Craigenputtock was to go to Edinburgh University, to endow three John Welsh Bursaries. Forster and Froude were made his literary executors. Froude, the sole survivor, to his sorrow, had to carry through the publication and editing of the manuscripts and journals, with the result now widely known.

He felt more and more the iron bar across the final gateway.

"Oftenest I feel willing to go; sweet to rejoin, were it only in eternal sleep, those that are away."

And at length, on February 4, 1881, the great tide that had now shallowed over the sandbanks, ebbed away into the vast eternal.

It was deemed that the solemn calm of Westminster Abbey with the companionship of the nation's greatest dust was his fittest resting-place; but his heart had turned back to Ecclefechan, and his dust was carried thither to mingle with the ashes of his kin.

CHAPTER IX

THE MAN HIMSELF

THE opinions regarding Carlyle's life and work, or at least the utterance of these, are of the most varied complexion ; indeed, perhaps, never were such more divided in regard to any man except Burns. A writer in *Blackwood* called him a "blatant impostor." The *World* came to the conclusion that

"there is little that is extraordinary, still less that is heroic, in his character. . . . Full of littleness and weakness of shallow dogmatism and blustering conceit";

while the *Quarterly*

"did not think he was a deep thinker."

Fraser's Magazine, which might have remembered that it had once had the honour of having delivered *Sartor Resartus* into the world, summed up its opinion by saying,

"He cultivated a contempt of the kindly race of men."

This kind of thing, of course, felt its justification in Froude's *Life*, in which, following undoubtedly the opinions of Carlyle himself in regard to the methods of true biography, the great sage had been made to sit in his bones before the world. There is no doubt that a cabinet photograph with all the wrinkles painted out is a pleasanter frontispiece for a man's work than a picture

by the "Röntgen ray" process; yet no greater injustice was ever done to a man than was done to Froude. He was looked upon as a ghoul taking up his master's body from the grave with a pitchfork, and turning it round and round to show the world that it was, after all, very common clay. Carlyle's clay, in which his soul had dwelt, was as common as the clay of any peasant of his race, as common as Ecclefechan with the burn that ran through the streets, but the soul that dwelt in it was as uncommon as any the centuries ever produced. If you get yourself photographed in front of your house, for a picture post-card, the photographer can hardly be blamed if the dog-kennel come into the picture, or the week's washing flap the tail of its secrets round the end of the gable. No biography of Carlyle would have been the least true that had not the sub-bass accompaniment of his growl at Adam's curse of labour, the eccentricity of his snarl at his contemporaries, and the glimpses of a home life wrecked by his labours for posterity. If any of his critics had experienced the indigestion which was his constant companion,

"like a rat gnawing at the pit of his stomach,"

the result might have been even worse than it was in the case of Carlyle! The fact is, that Froude loved his hero too much, and recorded in sober earnest such opinions as in another biographer might have made us look for the tongue in his cheek!

In all this side of Carlyle one must remember the crabbed fighting stock from which he sprang, the struggle he had endured on every hand, with the many crucifixions and much antagonism through which he had climbed, by midnight vigils and daily toil, to the position

which he claimed as his of right, as a warrior might claim a conquered kingdom. His stalwart clinging to what he felt to be the truth in his opinions and his methods, notwithstanding the bitterest critical opposition of those who had been living at ease in the temples whose windows he was breaking, went to the forming of many of his characteristics. Then, further, one must remember how long the public was in giving him that acknowledgment as a thinker which he undoubtedly deserved, and which, with the egotism of genius, he knew he ought to receive ; as well as the absolute injustice of the blind opposition to his *Sartor Resartus*, an immortal masterpiece of poetic philosophy of life, which vindicated his own opinion of it, in the appreciation of to-day, when it is, next to his *French Revolution*, the most popular of his works.

He won his throne at last, but, though the threatening tide had drawn far away, his feet were yet wet with the hissing spume of its spite ; and the "girn" of opposition, although remote, was heard even until the finish. When the world tries to put down an insignificant soul, it usually succeeds in the first thrust ; but scorn, laughter, and vituperation only madden a heart which knows the value of the truth that is within it ; and, when that heart smites in return, it keeps on smiting, even after it has slain, till bitterness abides in its depths even after the victory.

A strong man like Carlyle can feel little gratitude to the public for running to buy his books, or to put chaplets on his head, in the late afternoon of his day, when the joy of success or the bitterness of failure alike can mean nothing to him. There comes a time when, to the heart whose recognition has been too long delayed,

"success and fame are empty sounds." To Carlyle it had within it a

"silent sorrow . . . painful retrospections, nothing else."

In regard to his relations with the woman of genius, whose life ran curiously alongside of his, like a stream which, though it has its sunny reaches, whimpers in the stony places, till all hear it far-off in the darkness, there surely never was a greater and more pathetic illustration of that most terrible epitaph of human futility contained in the words "Too late." Love does not always wait for recognition. Eurydice returns no more. The darkness and the silence can only give back echoes to the cries of one heart from this side, lonely for ever.

If ever a man wrote for posterity, determined to give his best to those whom he could never see, but whose lives he wished to guide aright, regardless of praise, blame, or wage, that man was Carlyle.

He was an anomalous creation, a contradiction in human terms; for it is obvious to any one who looks into his story that he never was suited for domestic life, while, at the same time, he could not live without a sympathetic heart at his fireside. And most assuredly, while no other wife would have been suitable for him, no more unsuitable one than Jane Welsh could have been his. She had too clear a vision of his faults, and too clever a tongue for the expression of them, while, at the same time, she knew her own genius, and the sacrifice she had made for the companionship of this rugged prophet. Nevertheless, he knew what it meant for her, in some degree, alas, too late! "Heroic, lovely, mournfully beautiful as in the light of eternity. . . . From birth upwards she had lived in opulence, and now for my sake had

become poor—so nobly poor.” She herself gave a sad summation when she said, near the close of her life: “I married for ambition, Carlyle has exceeded all that my wildest hopes ever imagined of him—and I am miserable.” One must, of course, remember that her heart had a wound in its depths before she married Carlyle. Such a love as she had borne for Irving could not be torn out by the roots without leaving behind it a perennial pain.

As for his courage, which enabled him to bear adversities and such loss as that entailed in the destruction of his manuscript of the *French Revolution* with the highest strength of a Christian and the noblest calm of a Stoic, nothing surpassing it can surely be found in the story of any man of action and of thought.

It is quite natural, of course, that this man, shut up in his soundless room, looking through the windows of imagination, which had been well cleaned by the application of everything written on the subject, crumpled up and applied to the pane, should become thought-centred on himself. When a person looks at martyrdom from an attic window, he is apt to shout encouragement to the martyrs, though he himself at the moment is not suffering even from toothache; and Carlyle is not the only “positive Christian,” as his wife described him, ready bravely to bear pain while others endured it, but

“a roaring Thor, himself pricked by a pin.”

Imaginative writers since the first, even the most sympathetic, have not been unlike him in this.

“If he were uncomfortable, he required the world to be uncomfortable along with him,”

is true of him. The most sympathetic of all our poets

cried aloud in words which touch the hardest heart to-day—

“How can you chant, ye little birds,
And I sae weary, fu’ o’ care?”

Carlyle was an honest man, and it is honesty that wins the front seat at the end, or a little before it, after all the frauds have been put in the penitentiary. “The meek shall inherit the earth—when every other body is done with it,” is a truth; and probably, in reality, no people have ever made more noise about the wrongs of humanity—which comprised their own—than the meekest men and women that ever were covered by any Beatitude. Indeed, if a man is proclaiming the wrongs of his fellow-men, is he not as one clothed with authority, in speaking not like the Scribes, but in being able to point to himself as an example of outrage and neglect? Hence, the sneer at Carlyle in this respect is a demand for perfection in humanity, neither just nor true.

His humour, sardonic, rugged, with epithets of scorn, sharp-pointed, which he slings like arrows so that they stick in the thickest hide, was not only the inheritance from his ancestry, strong-tongued, hot-headed, with a vocabulary that rang like sledge-hammers in a village smithy, but carried, in reality, the peculiarity of its Scottish origin. No race can excel the Scots for ragged-edged, flesh-and-bone-cutting, marrow-piercing scorn of laughter that has sharp teeth in it. It was not, thus, so much his own temper, but the temper of his race, that gave his mental measurements the dialect they possessed.

This man, then, with an inheritance such as he had, did not hesitate, as it were, to pin papers at the tail of any popular fetish, and write with scornful epithets on

all unworthiness of any golden calf, however much the crowds with drum and cymbals danced about it on the market-place. Was it not natural, also, that the syco-phants, who in their worship have never looked up the length of rocky Sinai in the mist, should try to stone the disturber of their ancient prejudices, that the priests of *laissez-faire* should pelt with every censure at their hand the rugged prophet who with whirling flail of scorn broke in upon their sleep? He was not very forgiving—neither were those who refused to forgive him! The worst of it is, that we wish too much to sand-paper our great men to a uniform smoothness. He was, in truth, the worm which not only turned, but which, when crushed, burst like a torpedo, and left an ache in the foot of him who trod upon it, which corn-plaster could not soothe.

Carlyle took his idea of the function of the scholar from Fichte, that the

“scholar should stand up as the true priest, minister between the material and immaterial, tribune of the people, advocate of the rights of men against all tyrannies and oppressions.”

As some one has said of the literary life—

“That life is consecrated to the creation of an age’s moral consciousness.”

The writing scholar is the creator of his generation’s good and evil. His work is the bread of the tree of life.

His gospel seems full of contradictions, but every gospel that differs from that of the Scribes and Pharisees must be so. “Silence and action” seem such contraries, but they are often seen in operation. Earth does not creak on its axis, and the tides of ocean do not turn with a click. “Learn to labour and to

wait," is an abiding motto of bigness in life and thought.

He gave to the world a feast of great variety: criticism, biography, history, politics, poetry, and religion. All he wrote is in his own dialect, with a slight German accent. He is, to the hearing ear and to the understanding heart, as much a dialect poet as Burns. His English is almost an acquired tongue.

His opinions are not always demonstrable by laws of mathematics or cold logic. He does not argue on them; he says them, and there they remain in their own shape, in their own clothing.

As one said, he wrestled so long with Jean Paul to master his spirit,

"that, like Jacob of old, his thigh has been put out, and he has halted in his English ever since."

Of course, Carlyle was not the first English writer who brought the literature of Germany in touch with English literature. The spirit of continental revolt spoke through Wordsworth, Byron, and Coleridge. The last-named, along with De Quincey, shoved his head sometimes out of England through German windows, but Carlyle kept the door open between. Yet, notwithstanding the crookedness of Carlyle's style, he brought back into the page of English literature many pure, old Saxon words. His *Wilhelm Meister* introduced to the English people Goethe's interpretation of *Hamlet*, which threw the broadest light on the meaning of that stupendous play which had ever fallen upon it.

After all, though his style be difficult, it is most often only a nut with a hard shell, which is worth cracking for the rich kernel which is within.

The worst of it was that it begot imitators who thought that if they used the tune it did not matter so much for the words and thoughts of the song. As the *Spectator* said :—

“We have smiters and denunciators out of number ; the glowing and generous dogmatism of Carlyle has called up a host of imitators who, while quite as positive as their master, possess neither his brain nor his heart.”

The idea that he was only a cantankerous grumbler also had got abroad, but he was not only intensely human but humane also. Leigh Hunt, who knew intimately what he spoke of, wrote :—

“I believe that what Mr. Carlyle loves better than his fault-finding, with all its eloquence, is the face of any human creature that looks suffering, and loving and sincere ; and I believe further, that if the fellow-creature were suffering only, and neither loving nor sincere, but had come to a pass of agony in this life which put him at the mercies of some good man for some last help and consolation towards his grave, even at the risk of loss to repute and a sure amount of pain and vexation, that man, if the groan reached him in its forlornness, would be Thomas Carlyle.”

He loved to speak of Carlyle’s “paramount humanity.”

As Morley said, Carlyle was “not only one of the foremost literary figures of his own time, which is a comparatively small thing, but one of the greatest moral forces for all time.”

With that we are content to leave him to the final judgment of the ages as philosopher, historian, prose-poet, and humorist, among the greatest, unique.

“Men’s evil manners we write in brass :
Their virtues we write in water.”

CHRONOLOGY

- 1795. Born at Ecclefechan.
- 1805. Annan Academy.
- 1809. University of Edinburgh.
- 1814. Mathematical Master at Annan Academy.
- 1816. Kirkcaldy Schoolmaster.
- 1818. Edinburgh, private teaching, and Encyclopædia
work. Translated Legendre's *Geometry*.
- 1819. Law Studies.
- 1821. Meets Jane Welsh.
- 1822. Tutor to Buller. *Life of Schiller*.
Translates *Wilhelm Meister*.
- 1824. Visits London.
- 1825. Hoddam Hill. At German Literature.
- 1826. Marries Jane Welsh.
Comely Bank, Edinburgh.
Finished German Romances.
- 1827. Article on Richter in *Edinburgh Review*.
- 1828. Craigenputtock.
Articles : Burns, Johnson, Diderot.
Sartor Resartus written.
- 1832. His father's death.
- 1834. London.

- 1837. *French Revolution.*
- 1838. *Sartor Resartus* published.
Miscellanies.
- 1839. *Chartism.*
- 1841. *Heroes and Hero-Worship.*
- 1843. *Past and Present.*
- 1845. *Cromwell's Letters and Speeches.*
- 1850. *Latter-Day Pamphlets.*
- 1851. *Life of John Sterling.*
- 1852. Visit to Germany.
- 1858-65. *Life of Frederick the Great.*
- 1866. Lord Rector of Edinburgh University.
His address.
Death of Mrs. Carlyle.
- 1874. Prussian Order of Merit.
- 1881. Death of Carlyle.

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